

September 15, 1996

Shameless twins in Utah finally separated

Scientists to explore Amazon via Inter

China's panda pel trafficker

Russian President Boris Yeltsin will hand over responsibility for the nuclear trigger to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin while he undergoes heart surgery later this month, Russia television said Sunday. Quoting sources close to the Kremlin, the television said Mr. Yeltsin would sign a decree transferring the power to Mr. Chernomyrdin just before the operation, and will sign another decree to resume his responsibility as soon as he wakes up from the anaesthetic. The private television channel NTV said.

Jordan, Britain in joint exercises
AMMAN (AFP) — A British regiment of 500 infantrymen and Jordanian troops are conducting three weeks of joint war games, to end on Sept. 18 with a large-scale desert exercise, a British diplomat told AFP. The war games, which kicked off on Aug. 27 east of Qatana, south of Amman, had been "previously planned and they are not related to the current events" in the Gulf, the diplomat said. "The drill is a symbol of excellent cooperation between Jordan and the United Kingdom in the defense field," she said. "Both armies stage war games on a regular basis." Soldiers from the Cyprus-based British army's 1st battalion, the King's Regiment, are conducting the current drills with the Jordan Armed Forces' Third Mechanised Guards Battalion. On Wednesday, the British troops are to stage a mock assault using "mortars, heavy machine-guns and light infantry weapons supported by two helicopters."

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Charity group thanks Regent

AMMAN (Petra) — The Islamic Council for Daawa and Relief sent a cable to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday on efforts exerted by the Hasbani Charity Commission to protect and "rescue Muslims." Council president, Mohammad Tantawi, who is also the Sheikh of Al Azhar Mosque, expressed the council's deep appreciation of Prince Hassan and Jordan's acceptance to adopt training programmes for Islamic volunteers in Amman.

Arafat arrives in Zimbabwe

HARARE (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived in Zimbabwe Sunday for the first world solar summit which opens in Harare on Monday, the official Ziana news agency reported. The Zimbabwean government has said it expects 25 heads of state and government for the two-day meeting, but Mr. Arafat joined just three other leaders already in the country. They are Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari of Pakistan and Cape Verde President Antonio Mascarenhas. More than 80 countries are expected to be represented at the summit, mostly at ministerial level. The summit, an offshoot of the Earth summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, aims to promote the use of renewable energy sources through a 10-year world solar programme.

Netanyahu: Ties with U.S. secondary

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's headline government would rather strain relations with the United States than concede too much to its Arab peace partners, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in an interview broadcast Sunday. "Although relations with the United States is a strategic asset of utmost importance, it is not the supreme asset of the state of Israel," Mr. Netanyahu told Israel radio. "The supreme asset is our security. The supreme asset is things holy to us like Jerusalem," said Mr. Netanyahu in a pre-recorded interview broadcast in full on the Jewish new year holiday. "If an administration of the United States comes and says give up all this in exchange for relations with the United States, I will not give them up." (See related story on page 12)

Yeltsin to hand 'nuclear trigger' to Chernomyrdin

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin will hand over responsibility for the nuclear trigger to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin while he undergoes heart surgery later this month, Russia television said Sunday. Quoting sources close to the Kremlin, the television said Mr. Yeltsin would sign a decree transferring the power to Mr. Chernomyrdin just before the operation, and will sign another decree to resume his responsibility as soon as he wakes up from the anaesthetic. The private television channel NTV said.

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U.S. issues new warning to Iraq as negotiations intensify

Perry wants Baghdad to remove missiles from south; Bahrain agrees to host 23 U.S. warplanes; deployment of 5,000 U.S. troops stalled over Kuwaiti reservations; Saudis do not expect attack on Iraq; behind-the-scene diplomatic mediation said to continue

Combined agency dispatches
U.S. DEFENCE Secretary William Perry warned Sunday of possible further strikes against Iraq as diplomatic efforts intensified to defuse the stand-off between Baghdad and Washington.
Mr. Perry repeatedly said during his tour of Gulf Arab allies that the United States would take whatever action is necessary to ensure the safety of U.S. pilots patrolling the "no-fly" zones over Iraq.
"We cannot tolerate that threat to our pilots nor do we believe we can rely on (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein's promise that he

would not attack those airplanes," he said.
Mr. Perry also warned Iraq to withdraw its anti-aircraft missiles from the southern no-fly zone or face possible American retaliation, as the United States pressed on Sunday with its build-up of forces in the Gulf region.
"The only way that Iraq can avoid a strike is to remove (its) radar equipment and missiles from south of the 33rd Parallel," Mr. Perry told reporters after meeting officials in Bahrain, which agreed to allow the deployment of U.S. warplanes on its territory.
The Saudi defence minister, Prince Sultan, however,

said Sunday he did not expect a new U.S. attack on Iraq because Baghdad was being "reasonable."
Asked if he expected a military confrontation between the United States and Iraq after the Iraqi move, Prince Sultan replied to reporters: "No. I do not think so."
Iraq said on Friday it would suspend its air defence attacks on U.S. and allied planes patrolling no-fly zones over southern and northern Iraq. There have been no reports of any Iraqi attacks since then.
Prince Sultan told reporters that "Iraq's recent positions illustrate that it has adopted a reasonable attitude," referring to

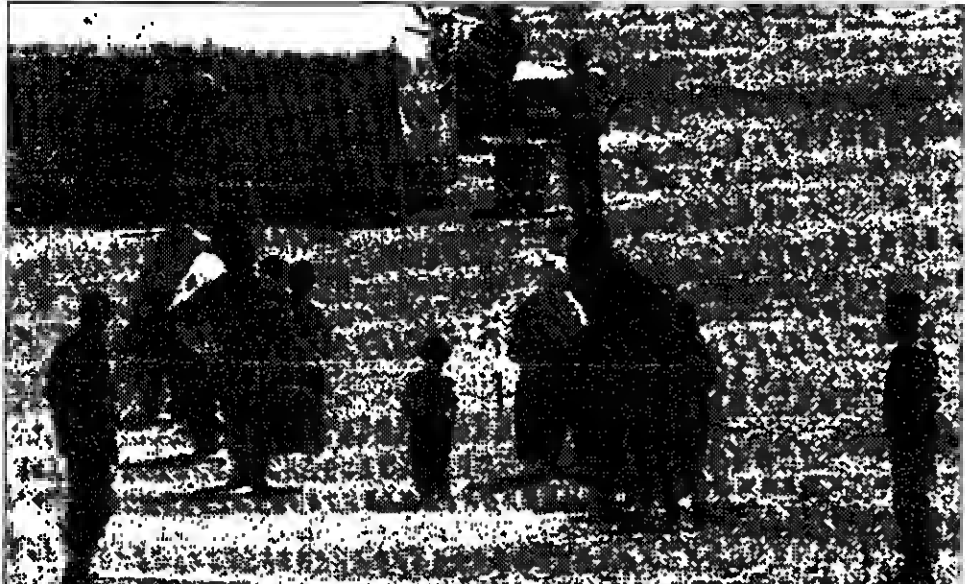
Baghdad's decision to suspend firing on allied aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones.
Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the U.S. goal was to restrain President Saddam, but Washington will not overreact to Baghdad's provocations.
"We are not going to be pressed into overreacting," she said on the NBC Television. "The issue is how to keep Saddam Hussein out of the neighbourhood."
U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Sunday that Washington was awaiting the green light from Kuwait before going ahead with its announced decision to deploy thousands of additional U.S. troops there.
Mr. Christopher shrugged off suggestions that the delay constituted a rebuff by the Kuwaitis, who were freed from Iraqi occupation by a U.S.-led military offensive during the Gulf war in 1991.
"Let's wait a little while and see what happens in the next few hours. I think it's not unusual for that country to take these decisions very deliberately," he added in an interview on CBS Television.

Official Iraqi newspapers on Sunday shrugged off any U.S. military strike. "The United States is under the illusion that by deploying its planes in the area it is



Islamic World. I am very worried about the Occidental approach towards the Arab World in terms of oil, and towards Islam, its culture, and human rights as in the case of Yugoslavia. However, it seems dialogue is possible with Yugoslavia because, oil is not involved."

tion, after six years of starvation that led to the death of hundreds of thousands of children, indicates that the humanitarian situation in Iraq has just not impacted the international consciousness. We all want to see the end of the state of siege, and an Iraq which is open to the international community. As for the future, Iraq should have a decentralised governmental approach towards the unity and integrity of its territory, with all segments of its population (Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds) participating in a state that contributes to regional security. If it can apply in Yugoslavia, I don't know why it can't apply in Iraq. I think people are seeing the double standards."
"Not only (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein did not violate Resolution 688, but clearly in northern Iraq



Two Turkish soldiers watch Iraqi Kurds and their families with their belongings entering a camp near the southeast Turkish border town of Silopi on Sunday after they were evacuated from north Iraq (Reuters photo)

Arabs warn Israel ties would suffer if it does not do more for peace

CAIRO (Agencies) — Arab foreign ministers warned Israel on Sunday that its nascent ties with the Arab World would end if a stalemate persists in the Middle East peace talks.
Arab states have threatened in the past to slow down improving relations with Israel, but the warning Sunday seemed to reflect growing frustration with the deadlock. Ministers repeatedly warned that a collapse in the peace process was imminent.
"There has been a unanimous demand to tie relations with Israel to progress on the peace process," Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said outside the Arab League meeting.
"Israel is wrecking the peace process and the basis on which it was established," he said. "Israel bears responsibility."
In a statement issued after the meeting, the Arab League said foreign delegations should be allowed to visit the Orient House, the unofficial Palestinian headquarters in East Jerusalem, despite Israeli attempts to stop them.
"The Arab identity of Jerusalem must be maintained. Arab and Palestinian institutions there should be preserved and foreign delegations allowed to visit the Orient House," the statement said.
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened to completely close down Orient House, and his government has repeatedly called on foreign delegations not to visit the building. The league's council urged "the two co-sponsors of peace process (the United States and Russia) to put pressure on Israel to halt settlements in the occupied territories."
It called on international political and religious organisations to stop Israel from carrying out archaeological excavations "which threaten the Western Wall of Al Aqsa Mosque" in Jerusalem.
And it launched an urgent appeal to the Arab countries to "provide financial aid" to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees which is facing a deficit budget estimated at \$50 million. The league rejected any attempts by Israel aimed at altering the "legal, natural or demographic" situation of the Syrian Golan Heights.
"The council considers any Israeli measure null and void and a violation of international agreements," the final resolution said, expressing support for Syrian demands for the return of the Golan Heights.
The league also called on regional and international organisations to pressure Israel to adhere to the nuclear Non-Proliferation

Iraq voices satisfaction over Arab position

CAIRO (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Said Al Sahaf on Sunday expressed satisfaction over an Arab League condemnation of Turkish interference in his country, singling out the position of Baghdad's arch-rival Syria.
"The Arab countries have expressed a common understanding of Arab national security and that the dangers that threaten Iraq can backfire on the entire Arab Nation," Mr. Sahaf said.
"Syria's position was very clear and conforms with Iraq's position concerning Turkish dangers to violate Iraqi sovereignty and we are very interested by the Syrian position," he added.
Syria and Iraq are ruled by rival factions of the Baath Party and Damascus was one of the key Arab partners of a U.S.-led coalition that helped drive Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.
Mr. Sahaf said he shook hands with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa at a ministerial conference of Arab League foreign ministers here which condemned "foreign interference" in Iraq although it was not on the agenda.
Mr. Sharaa, in statements carried by the Egyptian news agency MENA, meanwhile said his country was opposed to any attempts by Turkey to go

Algerian parties sign anti-terrorism accord after conference on reform

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian President Liamine Zerrouk closed a groundbreaking national political conference aimed at preparing the path to democracy Sunday with a renewed call for Islamic fundamentalists to renounce their armed struggle.
Delegates of the 38 bodies who attended the conference, including some opposition parties and moderate Islamic groups, signed a treaty condemning terrorism and pledging support for democracy.
Mr. Zerrouk reaffirmed a broad electoral timetable without fixing any dates, promising a referendum on constitutional reform before the end of the year, followed by legislative elections "before the end of the first half of 1997."
However, the legitimacy of the two-day conference

was undermined because sections of the opposition — notably the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and the rally for culture and democracy — chose to boycott the proceedings.
The FFS denounced the assembly as an "alibi conference, based on a false consensus and destined to consecrate the setting up of a constitutional dictatorship."
The outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which was barred from the event, said from its headquarters-in-exile in Bonn that it was "the main element of the Algerian political equation," and called for "serious negotiations" with Zerrouk's administration.
The military-backed Algerian government has been engaged in a civil war with Islamic fundamentalists following the cancella-

tion of elections in 1992 which the FIS was poised to win.
At least 50,000 people are believed to have died since then, with attacks of often atrocious brutality carried out by armed groups met by merciless repression on the part of government forces.
Mr. Zerrouk, who was reelected president in November last year, outlined a series of planned changes in the law to ban evocations of Islam and the use of the Berber language in politics, and to overhaul the electoral process to introduce proportionality.
He called on those groups who had been sidelined during the conference to bring "their contribution to

First results of 'successful' Bosnia polls expected today

SARAJEVO (AFP) — First results were expected Monday from landmark general elections in Bosnia hailed as a success by U.S. and senior international officials, who brushed off complaints about the ballot by leading Serb and Muslim parties.
Initial figures for the three-member presidency would be the first to emerge, election officials said, with victory expected for candidates from the nationalist Muslim, Croat and Serb parties that led Bosnia during the war.
The presidency is one of a raft of new governing institutions Bosnia's 2.9 million voters were called to elect during Saturday's first post-war general elections.
Western officials scarcely disguised their relief that the polls had passed off without any major acts of

violence, and kept Bosnia's fragile peace process on track.
Admiral Joseph Lopez, the commander of Bosnia's NATO-led Peace Implementation Force (IFOR), congratulated the people of Bosnia and NATO troops for the peaceful balloting, bailing "a smooth, uneventful" election.
France, Germany and Russia rushed to join the chorus of approval for the elections, whose successful completion should now clear the way for the withdrawal of the 52,000-strong NATO-led multinational peace force in Bosnia.
Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) officials organising the vote put the unofficial turnout at 60 to 70 per cent, but an official from an

Izetbegovic, Milosevic to meet in Paris

Bosnian Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia plan to meet in Paris for talks on building peace, perhaps at the end of the week, France said on Sunday. The foreign ministry said France had planned the meeting with Carl Bildt, the chief international civilian representative in Bosnia, and played down any role by U.S. mediator Richard Holbrooke. Mr. Holbrooke said earlier in Sarajevo that Mr. Izetbegovic and Mr. Milosevic were aiming to meet in Paris in about three weeks' time.

Syria redeploys its troops in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Some 10-12,000 of Syria's estimated 35,000 troops in Lebanon have redeployed defensively near the Syrian border in recent weeks due to a perceived threat of Israeli attack, Lebanese security sources said on Saturday.

The move eastwards toward the Syrian border was still underway, the sources said.

Most of the redeployed troops had taken up positions in the mountain range on the Syrian border where the Syrian army has SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles and anti-aircraft gun batteries installed, they added.

The redeployment has reduced the Syrian army presence in towns and cities but not the overall number of troops in the country, still estimated at 35,000, political sources said.

Beirut authorities have been informed of the troop movements, which occurred over the last few days in the Lebanese capital.

The silence has fuelled speculation in the Lebanese media, which has published contradictory numbers on the troops and their redeployment.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said on Thursday that the troop movements had "nothing to do with Israel."

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country was watching the redeployment "very closely."

The Israeli military chief of staff, Amnon Shahak, said Thursday that an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon was conditioned on a withdrawal of Syrian forces.

In Lebanese political circles,

the redeployment is seen as a sign of Syria's growing confidence in the security situation in Lebanon. The troops were getting in the way at Beirut construction sites, they said.

The Syrian troops, however, have remained in the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah suburbs of Beirut, and have maintained road-blocks at key access points to the city.

Syrian soldiers pulled down their tents and corrugated metal barracks, set up on Beirut's Mediterranean coast, and loaded their belongings into personnel carriers. The soldiers also moved out of buildings they occupied near the Saint George Hotel in west Beirut and abandoned some of their checkpoints in the capital, residents said.

"The Syrian quarters along the Beirut coast, which used to swarm with hundreds of soldiers, are nearly empty today," a Lebanese security official said.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said on Friday there was no need for conflict between Syria and the Jewish state. "I think that the Syrians understand that the way... is to come to the negotiating table and find ways to solve the conflicts peacefully and without confrontations," Mr. Mordechai told Israel's Channel One Television. "That is our way. That is the way in which I am leading."

Asked the Syrian troop movements in Lebanon, Mr. Mordechai said: "I do not think there are risks. There are all sorts of operations implemented in Syria. We follow them. We are doing what needs to be done."

Kabul, Taleban put out rival claims over Kunar

KABUL (AFP) — The Afghan government Saturday denied that eastern Kunar province had fallen to Taleban militia and said 43 Pakistani infiltrators and 17 Taleban soldiers had been arrested in the area.

Kunar is still in the hands of forces loyal to the Kabul government, an official spokesman said, following a report by Pakistan's state-run television which said Taleban had taken control of the province.

The spokesman said in a failed attack on Friday 17 Taleban fighters were captured in Kunar, and separately 43 "armed Pakistani civilians" who infiltrated into Kunar via Neva Pass across the border had also been taken into custody. He said the Pakistanis would be brought to Kabul.

Earlier, in Pakistan the state-run television said Kunar fell after its pro-government leader surrendered in advancing Taleban militia.

Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), a Pakistan-based private information service, said Kunar had not yet fallen and that negotiations were underway between the Taleban and pro-government commanders in the province.

A spokesman for President Burhanuddin Rabbani's military strongman Ahmad Shah Masood renewed condemnation of Pakistan, saying "peace will never come to Afghanistan as long as Pakistan interferes in our internal affairs."

The spokesman, Amrullah accused Pakistan of wanting "to sabotage every Afghan initiative for peace" and specifically charged that the Taleban's dramatic capture of eastern Nangrahar province Wednesday was with Pakistan military support. While the Kabul authorities concede the fall of the neighbouring provincial capital Mazar-i-Sharif in Laghman to the Taleban, they claim the rest of the province is still under their control.

"The Laghman district centres of Ali Shing and Ali Nigar are still with us," said Mr. Amrullah.

Both of these centres guard entrances to valleys north of Mazar-i-Sharif, with Ali Shing particularly important as it controls access to a road leading westwards over the mountains into Tagab Valley.

Tagab Valley is strategic to the defence of two vital Kabul government-controlled positions which it links together — Sarobi district centre and Bagram airbase.

In an interview carried by the New York-based Al Sharara newspaper, the Queen also said Jordan was closely involved in efforts to develop the Middle East as a "super destination" for tourists from all over the world.

Following is the transcript of the interview:

Question: Your Majesty, what is your future vision of tourism in Jordan?

Answer: Tourism is one of the most promising economic activities worldwide, generating about 15 per cent of the global turnover of financial capital. As a result of the progress in the peace process, the Middle East, generally speaking, is experiencing unprecedented growth rates in the tourism

American attack would torpedo anti-Iraq coalition — Gulf papers

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — Several Gulf newspapers slammed the United States on Saturday for threatening a new strike against Iraq and warned such attacks could torpedo the anti-Baghdad coalition.

In Qatar, Al Raya welcomed Iraq's decision to halt attacks on allied warplanes patrolling "no-fly" zones and urged Washington to talk to Baghdad. "The Iraqi decision has placed the ball in the American court," it said.

"Direct negotiations could lead to positive results that will satisfy all parties and lay the basis for a balanced relationship that will guarantee the interests of all and safeguard stability in the region."

Iraq on Friday abruptly suspended threats to shoot at allied aircraft patrolling no-fly zones in the south and north of the country, but the United States pressed ahead with a military buildup in the region.

U.S. officials said Baghdad's move could help ease tension but stressed they wanted action rather than words. Washington decided to send Defence Secretary William Perry for talks with U.S. allies in the region.

Despite the Iraqi move, tension heightened in the Gulf as U.S. Stealth bombers arrived in Kuwait and another 5,000 combat troops were heading for the emirate.

U.S. aircraft and warships on Sept. 3 and 4 rained more than 40 cruise missiles on Iraqi military targets in the south to punish President Saddam Hussein for ordering an offensive in a Kurdish "safe haven" in the north.

"The rash U.S. moves could weaken Iraq further and this could create a strategic gap that might be filled by Iran," warned the United Arab Emirates newspaper Al Khaleej.

"These moves could also



An Iraqi woman and her two children beg in the streets of Baghdad. Most of the 18-million Iraqi population are suffering immensely from the sanctions imposed on their country in 1990 (Reuters photo)

undermine the anti-Iraq Western coalition, from which the United States has greatly benefited.

"It is in the interests of the Americans to revise their rash policies and it is in the interests of U.S. friends not to get involved in this conflict of elephants," the paper said.

Another UAE paper, the English-language Gulf News, said any new U.S. raids on Iraq would lead to a "case of overkill" and warned that U.S. President Bill Clinton could pay the price in terms of international condemnation.

"The Americans may bring their sophisticated weapons

but increasingly resemble just a punishment squad," said Gulf Today, also in the UAE.

"With some of their allies shifting uneasily in their seats, Washington runs the risk of looking like isolated bullies," it said, referring to the lack of support from U.S. allies such as France for military action against Iraq.

The UAE semi-official daily Al Itihad said: "In the face of this brutal aggression, can we forget Saddam Hussein for a while and remember the children, women and old men of Iraq... They are not Saddam Hussein... they are the ones who have suffered."

Moroccans approve constitutional reform

RABAT (AFP) — Moroccans voted overwhelmingly in a referendum Friday for a reform setting up a unique bicameral parliament in which both chambers can overturn the government and enact laws.

Final results issued early Saturday by the interior ministry said 99.56 per cent of voters had approved the constitutional change, which diplomats here suggested was designed to reassure Morocco's western friends while enabling King Hassan II to keep the opposition under control.

The interior ministry said turnout was 82.95 per cent — less than the 97.4 per cent achieved in another constitutional referendum four years ago.

The ministry said only 45,324 voters out of a registered total of 12,351,871 had voted against the reform.

Of the four main opposition parties only one, the far-left Organisation for Democratic and Socialist Action had

called for a boycott of the poll, claiming the reform merely sought to give the monarchy a "democratic facade."

Up to now the Moroccan parliament was composed of a single chamber, whose 333 "representatives" were elected for two thirds by direct suffrage with the remainder chosen on an indirect basis.

According to the opposition, this system allowed the regime of King Hassan II to "readjust" the outcome of any election to its own advantage.

Henceforth, the entire house of representatives will be elected for five years by direct suffrage. Its powers will be those normally devolved to a national parliament, including that of rejecting any government whose policies it does not like.

In theory, if the opposition wins the next elections, it will have full power to govern the country whether King Hassan likes it or not.

But — and this is where the second chamber comes in — the new system also creates a

chamber of councillor whose members will also be empowered to censure and overturn a government of which they disapprove.

The second chamber will comprise local councillors and representatives of professional groups and of workers' associations who presently make up the separate one third of the current parliament.

Its members will be elected by indirect suffrage for nine years and according to King Hassan will be there to represent "the active forces of the nation who work and produce." Like the chamber of representatives the councillors will be able to legislate.

The king is empowered to dissolve "both or one of the two chambers of parliament."

Western diplomats said that with this reform, King Hassan had guarded against the risk of a lengthy "cohabitation" with an opposition-dominated parliament, while at the same time providing a constitutional basis for democratic change.

Bahrain calls for union with Qatar

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain's crown prince, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Khalifa, called Saturday for a union with neighbouring Qatar, with which his country has a territorial dispute.

"We have called for a summit to resolve the differences between Bahrain and Qatar," the prince said in an interview with the newspapers Akhbar Al Khaleej and Al Ayyam.

"We reiterate our call because our ultimate aim is a union with our brothers in Qatar," he said.

"If the intentions are good, it will not be impossible to achieve the union," Sheikh Hamad said, adding the two Gulf states once formed a single country when the Khalifa family dominated Qatar.

"Bahrain and Qatar complement each other on the human, geographic and economic levels, something which should reflect positively on the citizens of the two countries," he said.

"Qatar is considered one of the richest countries in the world, which is a plus in contributing towards this great union," the prince said.

Sheikh Hamad called for Bahrain "to give a chance to Saudi mediation" over the Hawar Islands and Fasb Al Dibel rocks in the Gulf, a dispute which almost degenerated into armed conflict in 1986.

He also confirmed that Bahrain would boycott the next Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in December in Qatar because Doha had submitted the dispute to the International Court Of Justice in the Hague.

Bahrain insists the dispute be settled "within the framework of the GCC."

Manama called in August for a summit with Qatar to resolve the conflict and asked the authorities in Doha to withdraw their complaint at the World Court, but to no avail.

Qatar had said in July it was ready to pull the case from the court if Riyadh's mediation failed.

Bahrain is contesting the court's jurisdiction over the matter, arguing that Qatar did not have the right to bring the case to the court unilaterally under agreements Manama and Doha signed in 1987 and 1990.

Algeria opens talks on political reforms

PARIS (R) — Heavily armed security forces deployed around Algiers on Saturday as the country's leadership and about 1,000 politicians began a two-day conference to try to end nearly five years of political violence.

The two main secular opposition parties were boycotting the conference and radical Islamists have been barred from attending.

Eyewitnesses said a security net had been clamped on the capital out to the conference venue at the seaside complex of Palais des Nations, 20 kilometres to the northwest.

An estimated 50,000 people have been killed since the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election in which the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a commanding lead. The authorities blame guerrillas for the violence.

State-run Algerian television, in a live broadcast, showed President Liamine Zerroul alone on the podium as delegates, including army chief General Mohamed Lamari, former head of state Ali Kafi, government members and delegates stood for the national anthem.

The "national conference of understanding" was expected to endorse Mr. Zerroul's main proposals:

— A ban on the use of religion as a political weapon, although existing parties founded on religion, like the legal Hamas, will have a year to change their focus and conform

is the state religion of the country's 29 million people.

Mr. Zerroul is also expected to reiterate his proposal for a general election early in 1997 followed by local elections.

But two of Algeria's independent newspapers, Al Watan and Liberté, forecast few concrete results in editorials under the same headline — "shadow of those absent."

"The great losers will be, once more, the people who voted en masse on Nov. 16 (in the presidential election)... They find increasing difficulty in accepting the manoeuvring of the politicians who are more occupied in ensuring their seats and privileges continue," said Liberté.

The two main secular opposition parties, the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and the Rally for Democracy and Culture (RCD), are boycotting the conference. The former accuses Mr. Zerroul of trying to impose "institutionalised dictatorship".

The security deployment underscored the continued killings in the gas and oil producing country, much of it hidden from the public through tight censorship of the media.

Just two days ahead of the conference, a car bomb exploded in southern Algiers killing two people and wounding 28.

The government-appointed rights watchdog, Human Rights National Observatory (ONHDH), said in August that about 1,400 civilians had been killed by such bombs in the past two years.

Queen: Tourism expansion not at the expense of the environment

ANMAN (J.T.) — While Jordan is pursuing intense efforts to develop the tourism industry, it is not neglecting the environmental concerns and would not allow tourism to damage the natural features of the country, Her Majesty Queen Noor has said.

In an interview carried by the New York-based Al Sharara newspaper, the Queen also said Jordan was closely involved in efforts to develop the Middle East as a "super destination" for tourists from all over the world.

Following is the transcript of the interview:

Question: Your Majesty, what is your future vision of tourism in Jordan?

Answer: Tourism is one of the most promising economic activities worldwide, generating about 15 per cent of the global turnover of financial capital. As a result of the progress in the peace process, the Middle East, generally speaking, is experiencing unprecedented growth rates in the tourism

sector, while Jordan, in particular, has witnessed unparalleled growth with the number of tourists exceeding one million in less than a year. Although we find the increased interest in Jordan very promising, we are also determined not to advocate tourism at the expense of our environment which is why we are focusing our efforts on developing and applying the principles of eco-tourism. Eco-tourism occurs when people travel to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area with minimum disruption to the natural and social environment. From an economic point of view, it is a sound venture as it stimulates economic activity and growth in remote and rural areas without entailing large-scale investment and ensures a more sustainable future for a relatively unaffected site — this is an important point for us considering our limited resources.

Jordan developed its first eco-tourism project in 1994 when the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), in partnership with the government, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, began a major project based at the newly established nature reserve at Dana in southern Jordan — only 45 minutes by car north of the Nabataean city of Petra! The ecologically rich reserve includes 4 distinctly different yet adjacent eco-systems and is home to several rare and endangered animals and plants such as the striped hyena, the desert gazelle and cat, the Nubian ibex, the wild cypress and wild pistachio trees.

The focal point of the reserve is the Dana Village, which was founded in the 15th century and is at present inhabited by approximately 200 resident bedouins. The village, whose traditional stone houses were renovated by the RSCN and the private sector, had been previously

deserted by its inhabitants — due to the lack of basic services. The RSCN built a Visitor's Centre, accommodations for visiting researchers and tourists, a field research centre as well as a handicrafts production and sales centre that sells local raisins, walnuts and wild thyme in recycled glass and banana leaf containers.

The Noor Al Hussein Foundation, in cooperation with the World Bank, has established small-scale income-generating projects for the local villagers such as beekeeping, goat raising, the cultivation of medicinal herbs and jewellery production using local semi-precious stones; the latter are very popular gift items in Jordan right now. For archaeology enthusiasts, the reserve also includes 98 sites ranging from the Epipaleolithic period 20,000 years ago to the Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic Age. The most significant of these sites is the Nabataean copper mining centre of

Feinan, which is considered the second most important archaeological site of southern Jordan after Petra.

Q: What are the national and regional steps that can contribute in promoting tourism in Jordan and increasing its tourist potential?

A: Our minister of tourism recently attended a regional conference on tourism in Damascus, where it was decided that Jordan, Syria and Lebanon would launch joint tourism projects that would increase the number of visitors to the three countries. Furthermore, the General Assembly of the Middle East Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association, which is one of the three regional economic bodies initiated during the Middle East and North African Summit (MENA) hosted in Amman last year, have begun to develop a unified marketing policy for the Middle East with the aim of transforming the region into the "next global super destination." The main mission

of the association, whose members include Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinian National Authority, Turkey, Israel, Cyprus, Morocco and Tunisia, is to organise tourism and increase travel to the Middle East by harmonising laws and regulations governing the industry throughout the region. In addition to those regional efforts, the Jordan Tourism Board will open four new offices in Paris, New York, Frankfurt and London to promote Jordan overseas as a "culture and nature destination."

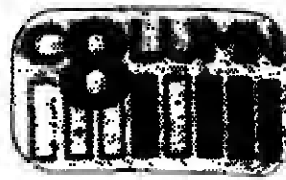
Q: The Bani Hamida Project is an important and vital pattern in showing Jordan's legacy in the eyes of the world. Are there plans to expand this project and establish parallel projects?

A: The national handicrafts development project was established by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation in 1985 to revive traditional crafts and preserve a unique aspect of our national heritage. Jordan is now fortu-

nate to have a varied range of public and private handicrafts centres with which the NHF's Jordan Design and Trade Centre (JDTCTC) works closely either in technical and management training, product development or in local and international marketing. The JDTCTC is also involved in developing trademark, design and copyright laws for the protection of the country's handicrafts artisans.

The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project was launched at that time years ago by the U.S.-based Save the Children and the Noor Al Hussein Foundation as part of this national effort to revive and promote Jordan's heritage, increase work opportunities for low income families and enhance the status of women as wage earners and decision makers in their communities. By training women to generate income and assume managerial positions, the Bani Hamida

(Continued on page 7)



Siamese twins in Utah finally separated

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Siamese twins joined at the head were successfully separated after undergoing a delicate sixth operation, a hospital spokeswoman said.

"It went very smoothly," said Bonnie Midget, spokeswoman for the Primary Children's Medical Centre here. Doris and Bessy Gonzales, who were born in Honduras, had endured five operations since being brought to Utah. Friday's procedure took nearly nine hours and focused on dividing two remaining veins, severing tissue deep within the brain and removing scar tissue from previous operations. The girls were listed in critical condition, but were doing well, Ms. Midget said.

Scientists to explore Amazon via Internet

CARACAS, Venezuela (R) — Armchair explorers take note: A group of scientists from London's Imperial college has devised a project to explore South America's Amazon jungle in comfort. Using a powerful laptop computer and satellite phone the British scientists plan to relay every step of their Amazon adventure onto the Internet, the British embassy in Caracas said.

"In areas like the Amazon, the logistical difficulties involved in access and operation in the desired location, are generally more significant than the task of investigation itself," the embassy said in a release.

"Netpedition will try to show that scientists and students can carry out investigations in remote places without having to leave their offices," it said. Under the project, web browsers will be able to experience the sights and sounds of the jungle and join in the identification of findings such as rare butterfly species which the expedition hopes to capture.

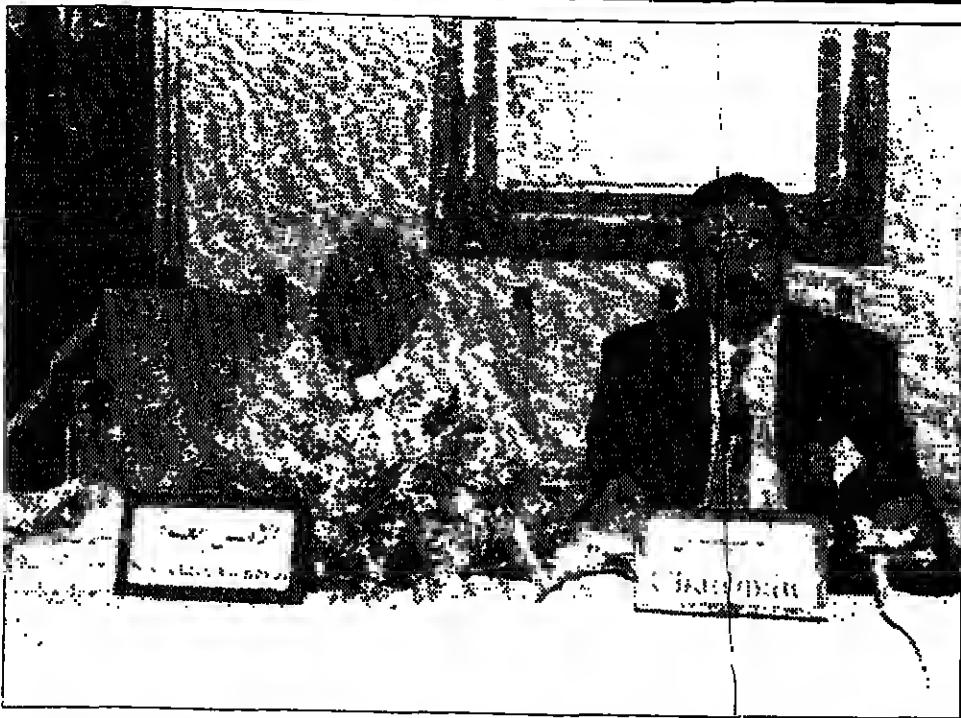
The Internet address is: <http://sunsite.Doc.Jc.Ac.UK/netpedition>.

China sentences panda pelt traffickers

BEIJING (R) — A Chinese court gave suspended death sentences to two men and jailed six others for possessing pelts of endangered pandas and the golden-haired monkey, the Xinhua News Agency said. The Quanzhou Intermediate People's Court in the southeastern province of Fujian sentenced Zhang Heping and Liu Xiantan to death but suspended their sentences for two years. Xinhua said. Their sentences would be commuted to life imprisonment if they showed remorse, it said. A third defendant was sentenced to life imprisonment and five others received jail terms ranging from eight to 15 years, the agency said. The defendants were caught by border police in May 1995 when they tried to sell two panda pelts and a golden-haired monkey pelt for 350,000 yuan (\$42,000), it said. They had bought the pelts for 21,500 yuan (\$2,600).

Rollerskating banned in Hanoi streets

HANOI (R) — Rollerskating and skateboarding will be banned in Hanoi from next month as part of a drive to make the capital's hectic streets less dangerous, official media reports said. Rollerskating has become increasingly fashionable in Vietnam's cities, where youths often whizz through the streets clinging to the back of motorbikes and bicycles. A Hanoi People's Committee official said the ban would go into effect on Oct. 1, but the Communist Party daily Nhan Dan questioned whether there was any need to wait.



Chairman of the 26th meeting of Arab World representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Organisations Mohammad Hadid and Secretary General Sheikh Abdul Ghani Ashi Sunday address a symposium outlining the suffering of children and others in the Middle East (Petra photo)

Red Cross, Red Crescent expound on plight of children

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates to the 26th meeting of the Arab world representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations Sunday called for concerted global efforts to save Arab children who are suffering from starvation, displacement, and other deprivations along with the numerous consequences of armed conflicts.

"We call on the free people of the world to sympathise with and alleviate the sufferings of innocent Iraqi children who suffer both a lack of medicine and food as well as those Lebanese children who are injured or perish as the result of falling shells," said George Harrouq, Lebanon's delegate to the meeting which opened at the Amra Hotel in Amman.

Mr. Harrouq warned that the number of refugees, of homeless, and persons otherwise displaced is on the rise and that humanitarian organisation funds are not equal to such pressing needs, leaving the distress of these unfortunate people without respite.

He urged the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent to unite forces to better confront these challenges.

Secretary-General of the Federation of the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Organisations Sheikh Abdul Ghani Ashi addressed the meeting thus, "We realise that our efforts to ease the effects of disasters and conflicts fall far below our aspirations but we have been doing our best given our means."

Sheikh Ashi called for combining the work of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross associations and for an increased cooperation between them towards providing humanitarian services.

He also requested that various global organisations denounce violations of international humanitarian law as in the case of Bosnia and Israel as well as emphasise the hazards inherent in the imposition of sanctions against Iraq and Libya.

President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Princess Margaret of Holland gave a report which focused on the Federation's activities in the Arab World.

The meeting was organised by the Federation in cooperation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Societies (JNRCS) whose Executive President Mohammad Hadid lauded the Royal Family's continued patronage of the Red Crescent and Red Cross societies in the Kingdom.

Jordanian officials disappointed with progress on trade to Israel

AMMAN (J.T.) — A joint Jordanian-Israeli Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation will convene Sept. 18 to begin hammering away at some of the issues hindering trade between the two countries.

Jordanian officials last month said that they were disappointed at the volume of trade between Jordan and Israel during their first full month of trade (July). According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, trade amounted to \$1 million in Jordanian exports and \$1.7 million in imports. Government sources have said that this figure may actually be substantially lower, and estimate that it may amount to only 75 per cent of these totals.

"This is very disappointing for us," said Director General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Dr. Mohammad Smadi, "because there are people who are interested, but they are shying away because of the problems. Had things been easier, I would expect these figures to be much higher."

"I will be the first to tell you that things aren't okay," he said.

Officials blame the slow start on bureaucratic Israeli policies and unwarranted security considerations. A government source said that Jordan has two main complaints in its trade relations with Israel. The first, he said, are delays at the border due to "security" and the cumbersome back-to-back system of transport. The back-to-back system, stipulated by the transport accord requires that goods moving between the two countries and between Jordan and the Palestinian self rule areas, requires that goods crossing either the Sheikh Hussein or King Hussein bridges be unloaded from Jordanian vehicles onto Israeli or Palestinian vehicles.

Jordan's second complaint, he said, is a hindrance in Jordan's ability to efficiently implement its trade accord with the Palestinians in the West Bank, which, he said, is caused by

strict and bureaucratic Israeli policies, and three different trade agreements that tend to obstruct trade between the three countries rather than aid it.

"We hear of vehicles delayed for days at the border due to 'security' considerations — what does that mean?" he said. "Also, the back to back system is time-consuming and costly."

The source said that Jordan would also like to bring forward the issue of Israel's economic agreement with the Palestinians, which "discriminated against Jordanian products in terms of the number and type of products we are allowed to export to (the self-rule areas)."

According to the economic agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, signed in April 1994, he said, Israel was to review the lists of products and quotas when self-rule extended into the West Bank. This, he said, has not happened. As a result, Jordan and the Palestinians have been unable to

realise the full potential of their own trade accord signed in June 1995.

Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority last week agreed to seek amendments to the Israeli-Palestinian agreement following a meeting between Minister of Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and his Palestinian counterpart Maher Masri.

Dr. Smadi added that he would also bring forward the issue of Israel's lowering of tariffs, which, he said has put Jordanian products at a disadvantage. The agreement states that Jordanian goods entering Israel would be allowed a 50 or 20 per cent tariff discount while goods flowing the opposite direction would be allowed a 10 per cent tariff discount. The idea was, he said, to account for the disparity between the two economies. However, there was a stipulation in the agreement that all tariff discounts would be applied according to the rate of tariff on the day of signing.

"Since we signed, Israel

has since lowered its tariffs, so we have already found ourselves at a disadvantage," Dr. Smadi said.

Also, he said, Jordanian products entering Israel have to meet Israeli standards and specifications and therefore must be tested and certified before entering that country.

"This takes months — sometimes up to eight months — to clear, and the cost is exorbitant," he said.

"Jordanian companies exporting are small. We do not have huge conglomerates that can bear the cost, which can be upwards of \$2,000-3,000, even for trial shipments."

Jordan and Israel signed a trade agreement in 1995 but it could not be implemented until the signing and implementation of a transport agreement signed in June of this year, and which was not implemented until late June. The formulation of a joint committee was stipulated by the trade accord.

average of 12 cases for every 100,000 citizens as compared to 40 cases for every 100,000 citizens in Saudi Arabia and Syria.

Dr. Abu Rumman said that his department launches regular national campaigns to combat the disease every year.

"Every year we carry out vaccination campaigns against tuberculosis among students in public elementary schools and the campaign covers at least 95 per cent of the children under six years of age," he explained.

"The Ministry of Health and its various departments guarantee free examinations and provide medication to all tuberculosis patients in Jordan," said Dr. Abu Rumman who

Traffic accidents increase in August

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 58 persons died and 1,596 others were injured in a total of 3,845 road accidents in August, according to a statistical bulletin issued from the traffic department Sunday.

In a logistical breakdown 2,861 of these accidents occurred between motor vehicles with the remainder comprising collision with pedestrians and other assorted articles and, according to the report, those in the 21-30 age group formed 26 per cent of those injured or killed while the 10-20 age group accounted for 22.6 per cent of the total injuries.

The report stated that the majority of drivers involved in the accidents

were young people ranging from age 21 to 30 who were responsible for 35.5 per cent of the total accident number.

The Amman governorate sustained the lion's share of accidents, totalling 67.3 per cent, followed by the Zarqa governorate at 8.7 per cent, Irbid with 7.8 per cent, Balqa 4.3 per cent, Aqaba 2.16 per cent while other governorates reported fewer accidents.

Comparing August's accidents with those of July, the report stated that in the past month the total number of accidents increased by 302 over the July figures, while the number of injuries and deaths increased by 116 and 12 respectively.

170 TB cases diagnosed this year

By Samir Hijawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Khaled Abu Rumman, who deals with tuberculosis in the Ministry of Health, said that 170 new cases of the disease were registered in the first half of 1996.

This announcement comes on the heels of a recently distributed report by the Ministry of Health which states that in 1995 498 tuberculosis cases were registered in the Kingdom, of which 65 were diagnosed among migrant workers.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has rated Jordan among the countries which boast a relatively low number of tuberculosis cases with an

added that the cost of treating each person so affected costs the ministry between JD 70 and JD 100 monthly.

In addition non governmental and voluntary organisations have been active in their fight against the disease, he said, and the Jordan Society for Combating Tuberculosis has donated JD 20 a month to each afflicted patient.

According to Dr. Abu Rumman the breakdown of registered tuberculosis cases last year runs as follows: 223 in the Amman governorate, in Irbid 111, and in the Zarqa governorate 39.

The WHO estimates the number of persons who annually die from the disease at a global three million.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

*Performance by Les Talens Lyriques Musical Troupe at South Theatre, Jerash at 8:00 p.m.

CHILDREN'S SONG FESTIVAL

*Opening of festival at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m. (to be followed by contesting songs from Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Jordan).

LECTURE

*"Ismaili Sect and the Imamite Institutions" by Seyfiddin Al Qasir at the World Affairs Council, Jabal Amman, Fourth Circle (Tel. 618051/2) at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Water colours works by Salam Kanaan and Pia Hayes at Ali Art Gallery, Jabal Amman (Tel. 639303), until Sept. 26.

*"Summer '96" exhibition at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (including sculptures by Vera Tamari, photographs of Jordanian villages by Ammar Khammash, works by contemporary Arab artists, a mosaic exhibition, and others), until Oct. 8.

*Works by artists from France, Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, and Egypt entitled "Tapis Volants" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, apt. 24.

*Works by Batoul Al Fakiki at Baladina Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until Sept. 17.

'Green Channel' plan to boost exports

AMMAN (Petra) — The Customs Department Sunday implemented the so-called "Green Channel" whose stated aim is to help Jordanian exporters boost their competitive edge internationally.

Customs Department Director General Nazmi Abdullah today toured Queen Alia International Airport and expressed his confidence that the plan would facilitate relations between the Customs Department and various exports and import companies.

He said that 26 major industrial companies have been selected as the first companies to benefit from the new procedures in which products which are imported as input for later exportation will be exempt from detailed customs inspections if the importer carries the appropriate documents.

In order to qualify, the selected companies' exports must have exceeded JD20 million in 1995 or have surpassed JD1 million in sales taxes.

Mr. Abdullah stated that the "Green Channel" aims to remove barriers and procedures hindering the flow of trade, as well as ameliorating the investment environment of the Kingdom.

Companies who wish to be considered for the programme can fill out a designated form and present their documents to any of four officially designated customs centres in the Amman area.

2 men sentenced to life for murder of alleged spy

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman Criminal Court Sunday sentenced three men to life imprisonment terms in two separate murder cases, and accorded two more prison terms ranging from 10 to 15 years for the murder of two men.

In the first case, the court sentenced two men to a life of hard labour after they were judged guilty of the premeditated murder of Munif Nimer, 26, in Sweileh on June 19, 1995.

Kamel Kamal, 28, and Iyad Qassem, 22, were first sentenced to death by a judicial tribunal comprised of Judges Abdul Rahman Tawfiq, Mifleh Mubaidin and Ismael Hmouz, but the sentence was eventually reduced as the victim's family chose to discontinue charges.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the defendants, who confessed to police, said they planned to kill Mr. Nimer as they suspected him of spying for Israel.

On June 19 the defendants halted Mr. Nimer on his way home, encircled him, then proceeded to stab him with a knife and meat cleaver.

The men then fled the scene.

Mr. Nimer's body was discovered with the knife still thrust in his waist at dawn, shortly after the crime was committed, on the steps of Abu Rukabi School in Sweileh.

The prosecution had charged that the defendants

monitored the victim's movements for two months before the murder, then bought the instruments utilised for the murder.

In a retrial of two men who were sentenced to death by the Criminal Court on April 22, 1996, after being declared guilty of the premeditated murder of Amneh Ahd, 60, the tribunal decided to reduce its previous sentencing upon a request made by the Court of Cassation.

The Criminal Court Sunday amended charges of premeditated murder against Obeid Abdul Rahman Sheesh, 65, to complicity with the murder and sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

The court also reduced the death sentence handed down to Jamil Mahmoud Sheesh, 31, to life imprisonment with hard labour after the victim's family dropped the charges.

Obeid and his nephew Jamil confessed to killing their next of kin to cleanse their family's honour as Ms. Ahd married without familial approval 45 years ago. The victim's family released the two men from charges.

But the criminal court said in April that the defendants did not qualify for any sentence reduction because of the "heinous nature of the crime," and because the victim had, indeed, married with her father's approval.

Two months later, the Court of Cassation returned the case asking the Criminal Court to retry the case taking in consideration the

family's prerogative to drop charges.

According to the prosecution, Amneh was married in the West Bank in the early 1950s with her father's approval but her relatives objected and she has been considered an outcast by most of them for nearly 45 years.

On Aug. 21, 1995, one month after the victim was reunited with her family, the two defendants travelled from Madaba to Amman and lured the victim to a deserted area in Jabal Nazzal.

Jamil drew his gun and shot his aunt four times in the head and neck and turned himself in to police claiming that he had killed his aunt in a crime of honour.

In the third case the court sentenced Ibrahim Ali, 23, to a 15 years in prison with hard labour after he was found guilty of the manslaughter of a shepherd in the Batten area of Tafleeh on March 20, 1996.

According to court documents, the defendant was grazing his sheep in the Batten area when the victim Attallah Ayedeb approached him and asked Mr. Ali to leave the area as, Mr. Ayedeb maintained, his sheep were eating the harvest there.

A fight erupted between the two men and then the defendant drew his gun and shot Mr. Ayedeb twice in the chest killing him instantly.

All five verdicts will be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

Inspectors confiscate contaminated food

By Issam Qadamani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ministry of Supply inspectors Sunday raided the home of a Qweismeh District merchant and confiscated food products said to be contaminated.

The Amman Governorate Department of Supply Assistant Director Mahmoud Abu Hazim told the Jordan Times that the merchant had changed the expiry date on items such as fruit juice and potato chips.

Mr. Abu Hazim further stated that 1,800 cans and packets of foods meant for sale in the merchant's store were confiscated.

He said that the ministry's inspection teams were maintaining their regional inspections and referring any suspected violators of official standards to receive due process.

Minister of Supply Munir Sobar Sunday toured the markets of Zarqa and told local merchants that his ministry

was determined to prevent the practices of monopoly, manipulation or profiteering.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Supply announced Sunday that sales of imported wheat flour in Jordan dropped to 63.6 per cent down from 89.3 per cent since the beginning of last month when the ministry lifted its former bread subsidies.

But the ministry also maintained that there has been a simultaneous increase in consumption of locally produced wheat flour from 5.6 per cent to 30.8 per cent sales and that it is this flour that bakers use to make the most economical bread on the market at 180 fils per kilo.

The ministry quoted a report by the bakers union as saying that the sales of bread made from imported flour dropped by 40 per cent, currently at a daily 865 tonnes down from 1435 in July.

Save water...
every drop counts

Lebed denies Moscow rejected Chechen rebels' coalition proposal

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian peace envoy Alexander Lebed denied a report Sunday that Moscow had rejected Chechen rebel proposals for a temporary coalition government in post-war Chechnya. Echo Moscow radio reported.

Gen. Lebed told the radio: "I do not know about that." He said that the government had simply "talked about an orderly process for the peace settlement."

Interfax News Agency earlier quoted an unnamed government source as saying that the coalition being organised by the rebels, to rule until free elections were held as stipulated under an Aug. 31 peace agreement, would not be recognised by Moscow.

The rebels, led by the separatist President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and military

Chief of Staff Aslan Mas-khadov, have held a series of forums in Grozny over the last few days to form a coalition.

They say it includes several figures opposed to the rebel movement and they have invited members of the pro-Moscow government, which was installed by Russian troops but is now mostly exiled, to participate.

The leader of the pro-Moscow government, Doku Zavgayev, has refused.

The unnamed source told Interfax that Moscow wants a commission formally divided between the pro-independence rebels, members of the pro-Moscow government and representatives of the Russian government, the source said.

Russian representatives would form half the commission, with the other half

divided between the rebels, the pro-Moscow loyalists and other Chechen figures, the source said, adding that this had been discussed at a high-level meeting Saturday chaired by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Only with such a balance could "you talk about the start of financing from the federal centre of urgently needed social expenditures," the source said.

More than 40,000 homes have been totally destroyed in the tiny republic, according to the Russian government, and the economy is non-existent, with the approaching winter promising new hardships.

Although a ceasefire has widely held across Chechnya for three weeks, there are increasing signs that the attempt at a political solution reached on Aug. 31

is failing, with each side accusing the other of making impossible demands.

A key part of the accord was a cooling off period, lasting up to five years, during which time the political status of Chechnya would not be defined. But at Saturday's government meeting in Moscow, it was stated that independence for Chechnya was ruled out.

A Lebed representative was planning to meet with Commander Maskhadov in Chechnya Sunday to discuss the faltering peace process, Interfax said.

The latest peace process began after the rebels reversed the military balance by recapturing Grozny from the Russians in August.

They now control most of Chechnya, although large numbers of Russian forces remain in bases.



National Front Party leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen (right) salutes a cheering crowd during a march to mourn a white teenager allegedly killed by a youth of Arab origin. At left is party's general secretary Bruno Megret. Police estimated 2,000 people attended Mr. Le Pen's rally (Reuters photo)

French far right stages rally in Marseille after killing of teenager

MARSEILLE, France (R) — French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, ignoring charges of racism, led about 6,500 supporters on a tightly-policed march Saturday to mourn a white teenager allegedly killed by a youth of Arab origin.

Backed by shouts of "France for the French" and "Le Pen for president," the National Front boss marched through the Mediterranean port of Marseille and blamed the state for the fatal stabbing of 14-year-old Nicolas Bourgat Monday.

"The main responsibility lies with the decadent, impotent state, which was incapable of guaranteeing basic freedoms for its citizens, first among them security," he told a rally that broke up with scuffles with counter-protesters.

Nicolas' father, a local doctor, had pleaded against Mr. Le Pen's march, saying he did not want his son's death hijacked for political ends. Nicolas was buried Saturday after a funeral service in a Marseille church attended by about 5,000 people.

Foreign Minister Herve De Charette was among many mainstream politicians condemning Mr. Le Pen's march, saying: "Politics doesn't mean exploitation."

Police estimated that 6,500 Le Pen supporters, with banners saying "protect our children" and "immigration equals insecurity," marched in Marseille in bright sunshine, flanked by hundreds of police and jeered by many bystanders.

A few of Mr. Le Pen's supporters traded punches with opponents before police stepped in at the end of the rally. They also yelled "go home" and other insults at a group of Africans.

Mr. Le Pen, already at the centre of a furore this week after he openly espoused a doctrine of racial inequality, reiterated that "every day the facts show us that races are different."

Mr. Le Pen, who won 15 per cent of the vote in 1995 presidential elections, says

French civilisation is superior.

A 15-year-old French boy of North African origin, named only as Ktab, was placed under investigation on suspicion of murdering Nicolas Friday. He is being held in detention.

Church bells rang out across Marseille at 2.30 p.m. (1230 GMT), calling for five minutes' silence at the start of Nicolas' funeral in the Church of Saint Peter and Paul.

"Marseille is sick at heart because we have suddenly all become Nicolas' friends," Archbishop Bernard Panafieu told mourners by the coffin, draped in white and topped by Nicolas' pair of red boxing gloves.

Justice Minister Jacques Toubon said he hoped that the centre-right government would be ready to pass a draft bill tightening laws against racism to parliament next month.

The planned laws would make indirect provocation to racial discrimination, hatred or violence into crimes, he told the daily Liberation. Mr. Toubon said the government also wanted to stiffen sentences for racist crimes.

Mr. Toubon condemned Mr. Le Pen's race theories as "totally reprehensible" but said he could not be prosecuted under existing laws, saying they can only sanction direct provocations to racial hatred.

On Friday, French President Jacques Chirac visited the former Nazi extermination camp at Auschwitz during a visit to Poland and called for vigilance against possible future anti-Semitism.

Mr. Le Pen blames foreigners for unemployment, crime and insecurity and wants three million immigrants to be sent home.

His party is vying with the ruling Gaullist RPR party and the opposition Communists for the working-class vote in the run-up to parliamentary elections in 1998.

Chinese rivals come together for anti-Japanese rally

HONG KONG (AFP) — More than 5,000 people marched through the centre of Hong Kong Sunday in one of the biggest anti-Japanese rallies yet over disputed islands in the East China Sea.

Crowds sang traditional patriotic Chinese songs and waved banners saying: "Defend Diaoyu Islands against Japan's invasion" and "bloody Japanese get off our islands."

Protests have been mounting in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan since Japanese nationalists went to the islands, they know as the Senkakus, and put up a light house and other war memorials.

China and Taiwan also claim the islands and China has made formal diplomatic protests over the action.

At the Hong Kong rally, Taiwan and Chinese flags flew side by side and veteran Nationalist troops demonstrated alongside pro-Beijing politicians.

The crowd was to march on the Japanese consulate general in Hong Kong, which has been at the centre of other demonstrations in the past fortnight.

A spokesman for the Pro-Beijing Democratic Alliance for the betterment of Hong Kong, Lo Chi Keung, said the demonstration was "to show Chinese are united together despite different views and different politics."

"This is a righteous action. If someone invades your country you must defend it."

When asked if there was support for military action, Mr. Lo said: "Chinese are peaceful people and lots of diplomatic steps need to be taken. But we reserve the right to use force if it fails."

Hong Kong University student, Leung Wai-Shing, said: "It is not about politics it is about Japanese militarists invading Chinese land. If they don't leave we will take the islands back."



Northern League Leader Umberto Bossi arrives at a rally at one of his stops along the River Po as part of his 'March to the Sea' liberation festivities (Reuters photo)

Italians march for and against Bossi's secession

CHIOGGIA, Italy (R) — Separatist firebrand Umberto Bossi prepared to proclaim "independence" for his would-be northern state Sunday to a chorus of scorn from rivals holding rallies of their own in support of Italian unity.

Mr. Bossi was due to stage the grand finale to his three-day march to the sea along Italy's River Po at an afternoon rally in Venice, where he intends to declare a Federal Republic Of Padania and call for full independence within a year.

Two pro-unity rallies were also taking place at points on the Po and in Milan, headquarters of Mr. Bossi's Northern League, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets for a demonstration called by the hard-right National Alliance party.

The Milan marchers, many of them up from the south and wearing tricolour neckerchiefs and sashes in the red, white and green of Italy's flag, were accompanied by squads of police.

Security helicopters flew over the crowd.

National Alliance Leader Gianfranco Fini, who was to address the rally, branded Mr. Bossi a "clown" Saturday and called his journey along the Po, Italy's longest river, a "flop."

He was echoed by Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, who spoke of a "comic opera."

"It's an enormous stunt

and it's going to fizzle out," Mr. Dini told Corriere Della Sera newspaper.

Mr. Bossi, unfazed by evidence of scant support for his separatist dream even among League voters, set out from the Alpine source of the Po Friday on a trek he has filled with a quasi-religious symbolism to forge an identity for his "state."

He has so far drawn only a few thousand followers to each of his rallies, embarrassingly short of the one million plus supporters he had said he was certain to attract.

While Mr. Bossi has said "independence day" should be marked in peace, he declared Saturday that the first act of "Padania," a vague concept with no defined borders, would be to seek volunteers for a "national militia."

"The world should know that Padania is stirring and there is no longer any tolerance," he told a rally in the town of Boretto in the League's heartland region of Lombardy.

"If force is needed, and it is possible that it will be needed, from Monday the provisional government will take care of that with the voluntary recruitment of a national guard," he said.

The ominous declaration followed the first stirrings of violent opposition to Mr. Bossi's secessionist campaign with clashes between police and left-wing youths

who tried to attack League supporters in the northwest city of Turin Friday.

A crude incendiary device also damaged League offices in Venice, where several counter-demonstrations were planned for Sunday, including one by young extreme leftists.

Mr. Bossi was heading for the lagoon city via the Adriatic town of Chioggia, where he was expected to lead a symbolic burning of state television licence fee slips before taking to a boat to lead a flotilla of small vessels to the climax of his trek.

League organisers said they were expecting 8,000 people to greet Mr. Bossi in Chioggia, but only about 1,000 had gathered by late morning.

Mr. Bossi's League has built its support on discontent in the affluent north with high taxes and central government bureaucracy accompanied by disillusionment with mainstream politics.

The party won an unexpected 10.6 per cent of votes in Italy's general election in April but Mr. Bossi's subsequent switch from a federalist to a secessionist agenda appears to have alienated many followers.

An opinion poll published Friday showed an overwhelming 85.6 per cent of Italians were against secession.

Leading Democrat slams process to appoint post-1997 Hong Kong leader

HONG KONG (AFP) — One of Hong Kong's leading Democrats Sunday slammed the process for choosing the territory's post-1997 leader, saying it was "quite irrelevant" to most local people.

Democratic Party Chairman Martin Lee, speaking on government radio RTHK, said appointment of a chief executive after the territory returns to Chinese rule on July 1 next year was firmly under Beijing's control.

Speaking a day after nominations closed for membership of the 400-strong Selection Committee, which will choose the chief executive of what will be known as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, Mr. Lee said the process meant every decision concerning the territory could be made in Beijing.

China's much-valued "one country, two systems" plan is intended to give Hong Kong autonomy, except in matters of defence and foreign affairs.

The Selection Committee, for which 5,833 nominations were received, will also appoint a legislature to replace Hong Kong's present elected Legislative Council, which is dominated by Mr. Lee's party.

China, angered by democratic reforms introduced here by Governor Chris Patten since his arrival in 1992, has vowed to scrap and replace the current mini-parliament, which was elected to serve until 1999.

"I will not be surprised if the people of Hong Kong are not anticipating with any enthusiasm who these 400 members of the Selection Committee would be — because to most Hong Kong people it is quite irrelevant," Mr. Lee said.

"Everyone knows that the choice comes from Beijing and there can be little doubt that whomever Beijing decides upon to be the first chief executive, the 400 people will dutifully elect him or her."

"Although there could be a small number of people who might not appear to be yes-men or -women, Beijing will certainly have 100 per cent control of the Selection Committee, collectively speaking."

Mr. Lee said the interests of Hong Kong and China in choosing the chief executive were very different and could result in appointment of a leader who was a rubber-stamp for Beijing.

"You do not have to be a cynic to suspect that, as far as China is concerned, having the courage to defend Hong Kong may not necessarily be a virtue," he said.

"And Chinese leaders are still unfortunately more likely to pick someone who can satisfy them that he or she is prepared to take orders obediently from Beijing."

Mr. Lee did sound a conciliatory note, saying he hoped China "trusts her compatriots" and urging Hong Kong people to press for a democratically elected chief executive after the first leader's term.

Meanwhile, the British military continued its withdrawal from Hong Kong Sunday with the ceremonial closure of its Sek Kong Air Force Base, the last Royal Air Force station in Asia.

The base will continue scaled down operations for another two months but the ceremony was held earlier to coincide with the anniversary of the 1940 Battle of Britain, in which the air force repelled a German assault.

An air force helicopter squadron will be based at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport until June next year, immediately before the territory returns to Chinese rule on July 1.

The ceremony, which included a fly-past by four Wessex helicopters, was attended by Hong Kong Chief Secretary Anson Chan, the commander of British forces in Hong Kong, Major General Bryan Dutton, and Air Vice Marshal Terry Sherrington.

The British air force has maintained a presence in Hong Kong since 1927, when its first base in Asia was established at Kai Tak.

The air force moved its base to Sek Kong in 1978. The British forces withdrawal from Hong Kong is being conducted gradually. The 3,250 troops are already well down on the 8,000 to 9,000 here a few years ago.

British forces, which will number about 1,500 in the weeks leading up to the handover, will be succeeded by their Chinese counterparts.

The impending arrival of the People's Liberation Army has caused some trepidation here, with memories of the 1989 military crackdown on a pro-democracy movement on the Chinese mainland.

Kansas student wins Miss America contest

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey (AFP) — Former Kansas Senator Bob Dole might be lagging in the presidential polls, but the midwestern farming state can cheer about Tara Dawn Holland winning the Miss America contest. The 23-year-old music student and Kansas resident was crowned Miss America during the 75th annual contest held here late Saturday. The tall, brown-haired Miss Kansas who aims to become a music teacher, sang an opera role in the final round of the competition. Her ambition is to lead a national campaign to fight illiteracy. Ms. Holland has already written a book on the subject and produced a cassette used in schools and prisons in several states. Over 50 million Americans were estimated to have seen the programme on television carried by NBC from Convention Centre here. Miss Louisiana, who interpreted a Beethoven sonata, and Miss Oregon, who sang an aria, were selected for the second and third places respectively. For the first time this year, the home audience was able to help select the winner by telephoning a special number that tallied their votes. The women were judged in four categories: artistic performance; an interview defending their particular cause; the evening gown; and swimsuit contests. The winner receives \$40,000 in scholastic aid money, the number-two takes \$30,000, and the number-three \$20,000.

Indian court rejects plea to ban Miss World contest

BANGALORE, India (R) — An Indian court Friday dismissed a petition seeking a ban on this year's plans to stage Miss World in the southern city of Bangalore. "It had no basis and the question of obscenity could only be assessed during the show and not before it," Judge R.V. Raveendran said while dismissing the petition. The petition was filed by the all-women Mahila Jagruti (Forum to Awaken Women) which said that beauty shows degraded women and were an insult to Indian culture. The Indian media group Amitabh Bachchan Corp Limited (ABCL) said last month it had clinched the right to stage the Miss World contest. Earlier this month, the Mahila Jagruti announced the formation of a 15-member "suicide squad" to stop the contest. The group has given no details of its planned tactics. The right-wing, Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the State Farmers' Association also have said they oppose the beauty contest. The student wing of the BJP staged a demonstration in the city Friday against staging the Miss World contest. Police detained 61 people, including 21 women.

Chinese film icon to direct Turandot

BEIJING (R) — Internationally-acclaimed Chinese film director Zhang Yimou has been invited to direct the opera Turandot by Puccini in Italy's Florence Opera House, the Beijing Youth Daily said. The opera that tells the tale of a Chinese princess who hates foreigners but whose heart is finally won by a foreign prince is to be conducted by Zubin Mehta and performed in June next year, the newspaper said. Zhang, director of such films as Raise The Red Lantern, Red Sorghum and Shanghai Triad — some of which have been banned by censors in China — at first ignored the invitation, saying he knew nothing about opera and had never heard of Turandot, the newspaper said. However, Zhang had finally been won over when Italian organisers said they wanted a fresh eye to direct, it said.

Cool it with Camilla, Major reportedly tells Charles

LONDON (R) — Heir to the throne Prince Charles is under pressure to slow down attempts to have his long-time mistress, Camilla Parker Bowles, accepted by the British public, according to the Mail On Sunday.

The paper said Prime Minister John Major would tell Queen Elizabeth, whose guest he is this weekend in Scotland, of his alarm at what ministers see as a clumsy campaign by Prince Charles to win public approval for Camilla.

"They fear the campaign, which comes barely three

weeks after the prince's divorce, could backfire, casting a shadow over his succession," it said.

"The prime minister believes that while the cabinet is not against the union, thoughts of remarrying may have to wait until the turn of the century."

Prince Charles has made no secret of his intention to keep up his relationship with Camilla. But opinion polls show Britons, still enchanted by the younger, more glamorous Princess Diana, opposed by a large majority to their marrying.

In an effort to win over the public, apparently orchestrated by friends of the prince, newspapers were told last month where Prince Charles and Camilla could be photographed together.

On another occasion, an anonymous tip ensured photographers were present to capture Camilla sporting a new hairstyle and chic clothes.

According to the Sunday Times, however, Mr. Major can rest easy.

It said the queen was expected to reassure him

that Prince Charles's devotion to duty meant there was no likelihood of the couple marrying in defiance of public opinion.

"Both the queen and Major agree such a move would be disastrous given the public's opposition to Parker Bowles becoming queen," the paper said.

But it said the prince remained hopeful that he could one day win over public opinion and the Church of England to the prospect of his marrying the woman he has loved during three affairs over a quarter of a century.

Kansas student wins Miss America contest

ATLANTA (UPI) — Jennifer Jones, a 21-year-old student from Kansas, won the Miss America contest on Sunday.

Miss America 1996, Jennifer Jones, was crowned in a ceremony at the Georgia State Fairgrounds in Atlanta.

Jones, who is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, will represent the United States at the Miss America International pageant in Las Vegas.

She is the first Miss America from Kansas to win the title. Jones is a student at the University of Kansas and will be a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

Jones is the daughter of a judge and a lawyer. She is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and will be a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

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World News



U.S. President Bill Clinton meets members of the North Carolina National Guard and others who have helped clean-up in the aftermath of Hurricane Fran. President Clinton visited the State Fairgrounds, which is the headquarters of the Guard and to attend a round table discussion with state and federal leaders and to thank the thousands of volunteers who have helped (Reuter photo)

Hurricane pounds Canada's east coast

HALIFAX (R) — Hortense, the first hurricane to hit Canada's maritime provinces in two decades, battered the eastern coastline early Sunday, snapping trees, downing power lines and drenching the region with heavy rains.

Hortense reached landfall at around 10 p.m. Saturday with winds gusting up to 80 mph (128 kph).

"We're not getting reports of major damage, but there are many power outages and lots of rain," Mike Lester, director of Nova Scotia's Emergency Measures Operation, told Reuters.

"We'll get a better idea of the damage in the morning," he said.

Hortense was the first hurricane to strike the provinces in 20 years, which prompted one local fisherman to say he was awed by its fury.

"I've never seen anything like this, and I've been out in lots of bad weather," Wayne MacDonald, a mussel and scallop fisherman, told the Canadian Press news agency.

Many Nova Scotians spent the day shopping for extra food and emergency supplies as heavy rains lashed the maritime province for most of the day.

The hurricane is expected to be downgraded to a tropical storm later Sunday.

Earlier in the week the hurricane had sustained winds of up to 120 mph (193 kph) and dumped up to two feet (60 centimetres) of rain on Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Dominican officials put the number of dead as high as 10, with 50 people missing, and 16 people were killed in Puerto Rico.

Burundi: Ethnic strife could engulf region

BUJUMBURA (AFP) — Ethnic conflict affecting several countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa has overlapped national borders and could engulf the entire region, the foreign minister of Burundi warned Saturday night.

"Our sub-region is a cauldron, torn by ethnic problems which are no longer merely the concern of nations but are becoming regional in character," Luc Rukingama said on Radio Burundi.

The minister was referring in particular to fighting which continued to rage Saturday between armed Tutsis and the Zairean army in the Uvira region of Eastern Zaire.

Earlier Saturday, Burundi denied accusations by the Zairean government that it was being used as a base for armed gangs of Tutsis from Rwanda infiltrating into Zaire.

"It is not in the least necessary when coming from Rwanda, to pass through Burundi to get to Zaire, the two countries have a common border," Mr. Rukingama said.

He said such security problems were probably "basically ethnic" in character and called for meetings between the three countries to resolve the conflict.

The Zairean government Friday accused Rwanda and Burundi of "fomenting trouble" in Uvira region, where about 200,000 mainly Hutu refugees from the two neighbouring countries are camped.

It said about 3,000 young " Banyamwenge," Tutsis of Zairean nationality, had been enrolled in the Rwandan Patriotic Army, the former Tutsi rebel organisation which took power in Rwanda in July 1994.

Fighting between the Zairean army and armed Tutsis raged Saturday in the mountains around Uvira, which borders conflict-torn Burundi, independent Radio Agatashya reported.

On Friday, at least four Zairean soldiers and three Tutsis were killed in clashes between the two sides. A humanitarian worker, quoted by the radio, said at least 30 people were injured.

Around 50 people, accused of trafficking in arms, had been expelled to Rwanda, the radio said.

Quoting military sources, it said most were Banyamwenges and Rwandans and Ugandans who had "infiltrated" the region.

China offers carrot backed by stick to rival Taiwan

BEIJING (R) — China said Sunday it would send its most senior capitalist to Taiwan to ease strained ties but coupled the olive branch with an attack on attempts by its island arch-rival to rejoin the United Nations.

"Taiwan's attempt to 're-join the United Nations' will bring tensions between the two sides across the Taiwan Straits, and is doomed to failure," the official Xinhua News Agency said in a commentary issued Sunday.

Beijing has been enraged by a campaign by Taiwan, which China regards as a rebel province, to boost its international profile since the island's President Lee Teng-hui made a landmark private visit to the United States last year.

Xinhua accused the island's leaders of trying to deceive world opinion and their own people by professing commitment to eventual reunification with the mainland while quietly seeking support to raise Taiwan's international standing.

"The Taiwan authorities made use of the people's will," and cheated world opinion by creating a false appearance that the "will of the people in Taiwan in favour of rejoining the U.N. is upsurging," the commentary said.

It blasted attempts by Taiwan to build support for a bid to rejoin the United Nations, saying Taipei had instigated a group of Central American countries in July to support its re-entry.

Taiwan, which lost China's U.N. seat to Beijing in 1971, hopes that all 30 countries that recognise it instead of Beijing will help its bid to return to the world body.

"The farce directed by the Taiwan authorities to split the motherland cannot win people's will, so it will not help save their failure to 'rejoin the U.N.," the commentary said.

Taipei had been trying to win support by selling itself as a "democracy," Xinhua scoffed, apparently referring to Taiwan's first direct presidential elections last March that returned President Lee to office with a resounding majority.

Communist Beijing has regarded Taiwan as a rebel province since the Nationalist army fled to the island after losing the Chinese Civil War in 1949, and Beijing says it must be brought under its rule — by force if necessary.

However, Beijing extended a carrot as well as a stick to Taiwan, announcing that its most senior private-sector leader and capitalist was to lead a group of private businessmen to Taiwan in December on a visit aimed at improving relations.

Jing Shuping, chairman of the private-sector All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, would attend a meeting of entrepreneurs from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong in Taipei, the China Daily Business Weekly said.

Norma Major says the public has no right to know everything

LONDON (AFP) — Norma Major, the wife of British Prime Minister John Major, called Sunday for greater protection for the private lives of public personalities, saying the public does not have the right to know everything.

In an interview broadcast on BBC Television, Norma Major complained that her family had been photographed while on holiday in the south of France.

"Your house and your garden, that should be sacrosanct ... or if you're doing something which is obviously private, and I think holiday obviously is private," she said on BBC's Breakfast With Frost programme.

"In entertainment, or whatever, I think you're entitled to an element of privacy. I don't think the public has a right to know everything and be everywhere," she said.

Mrs. Major said there should be some form of legal protection from the prying eyes of telephoto lenses.

"Well, I think we could certainly make a start with cameras. The fact that they can take a photograph of someone obviously in their house perhaps, through a window, or in their garden which is clearly private property. I think we ought to be able to do something about that. I think it would be a start."

In recent days, Norma Major has been pushed to the forefront of Conservative Party campaigns ahead of general elections which must be held by May, but she denied being used as a "secret weapon" by party strategists.

"I don't think I'm about to start doing anything that I haven't been doing for the last five years," she said.

Sunday's interview was the second in a week with Mrs. Major, who had previously kept a low public profile.

She related how she had faced criticism for a fashion faux pas — wearing the same suit two days in a row in November 1990, when her husband was elected leader of the Conservative Party.

"I had two blue suits hanging up in the wardrobe and I'd worn the first one and I was going to wear the second one on the second day. They were both totally different suits and John didn't like the other one, so I wore the same one two days running," she said.

"So I got hammered on both fronts, for wearing the same thing two days running. I mean, you know that's terrible, isn't it. And of course the suit was perceived to be a disaster as well."

Clinton calls for racial unity

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton, in a fiery address Saturday to prominent black leaders, appealed for racial unity and continued efforts to rid the United States of discrimination.

Speaking at the congressional Black Caucus gala dinner, Mr. Clinton said he refused to abandon Affirmative Action programmes aimed at righting past discrimination because "there is still evidence that we have a way to go."

"If we're going to stay on the right track, we have to make sure that we have less discrimination, not more of it," Mr. Clinton told the 4,500 luminaries from politics, education, business and entertainment.

He said the United States was "blessed" by its diversity and this would be one of the strengths enabling the country to retain a leadership position in the world as it entered the new century.

"That's why I act so strongly when I see things like the church burnings or synagogues or Islamic Centres being defaced. Any of this is wrong," he said.

Mr. Clinton cited the case of Bosnia, where a U.S.-sponsored ceasefire has ended four years of brutal fighting among Serbs, Croats and Muslims. Elections in Bosnia Saturday were "a first halting step to moving toward the absence of war to the beginning of peace again," Mr. Clinton said.

Americans should learn about the tragic consequences of racial division and ethnic strife from the examples of Bosnia, Ireland, Burundi and Rwanda, and South Africa, Mr. Clinton said, noting that in each of those areas one group had defined itself by saying it was not the "other."

"We can never define ourselves as Americans by saying we're not the other guy. The other guys are us too. We are all Americans," Mr. Clinton said.

The president also appealed to black leaders to help pull the nation's inner cities from the grip of economic stagnation with a new commitment to investment and jobs.

"If you are committed, I am committed," he said.

Mr. Clinton tried to find common ground with a core constituency that largely opposed his support of Republican-backed welfare reform legislation.

"I want you to remind



Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole (left) greets Christian Coalition supporters with coalition founder Pat Robertson during the group's meeting Saturday. Mr. Robertson made a surprise introduction of Sen. Dole, with whom he had been an opponent of, during the 1988 presidential campaign (Reuter photo)

America that you can't require people on welfare to go to work unless they have work," he said. "We cannot ever forget that there are still too many Americans who could no more come to this dinner than a man on the moon because they're still looking for a job and they need one tomorrow."

Despite angering many blacks by signing the welfare bill that critics say will cut millions of people from the rolls, polls suggest that African Americans still support the president and will do so in November's election.

President Clinton's campaign lead over Republican challenger Bob Dole shrunk to 16 points in a tracking poll released Saturday, while Texas billionaire Ross Perot got a slight boost.

Mr. Clinton got 51 per cent in a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll of likely voters, compared with 55 per cent in Friday's edition of the same poll.

Saturday's poll showed Sen. Dole, who had been trailing Mr. Clinton by 23 points Friday, with 35 per cent of the vote from those surveyed.

Mr. Perot, the Reform Party's candidate, got 7 per cent in the Saturday poll, compared with 6 per cent the previous day.

The poll had a margin of error of four percentage points.

Sen. Dole, who gave short shrift to the Christian right at the Republican convention, appeared Saturday before the Christian Coalition and asked for its support in his presidential campaign.

"I would ask you for your full and complete support every day, every day between now and Nov. 5, 1996, when we will have a new president-elect," Sen. Dole told a cheering throng of nearly 5,000 at the coalition's convention.

"I can't tell you how much your support and encouragement and prayers mean to all of us," Sen. Dole said. "We understand your commitment, we understand your strength, we understand your potential."

Sen. Dole's appearance before the group was the result of a last-minute change in schedule, but it gave him a large and supportive audience in a group that had been cool to his two presidential opponents.

The crowd erupted in applause when coalition founder Pat Robertson, a one-time Dole opponent in the 1988 Republican presidential primaries, made a surprise introduction of Sen. Dole, called him a "dear friend" and raised joined hands with the Republican candidate at the podium.

"Jimmy," said Sen. Dole in response to the reaction.

Criticising Mr. Clinton for declining an invitation to speak, Mr. Robertson said, "I would ask, is there no room for any Evangelicals in the Democratic Party?"

On Friday, the group had booed independent candidate Ross Perot who he said some believed his candidacy in 1992 helped bring Mr. Clinton to power.

The coalition and its executive director, Ralph Reed, were instrumental in giving Sen. Dole the credibility with the Republican Party's conservative wing necessary to win the nomination.

But after a failed struggle to get the Republican Party's anti-abortion plank to include language that it was tolerant of differing views on the issue, Sen. Dole had kept his distance from the group.

Sen. Dole said he had not read the adopted platform, and pro-abortion voices were out on the agenda at the party's convention in San Diego.

But in citing a Biblical passage Saturday regarding spirituality, Sen. Dole also evoked the importance of Christian activists to the Republican Party and his own struggling campaign.

"We certainly need strength beyond our own," Sen. Dole said.

The purpose of Sen. Dole's appearance was ostensibly to introduce his running mate, Jack Kemp, who previously had been scheduled to speak.

But Sen. Dole also ran through many of the themes of his campaign stump speech — beginning with plugging his economic programme. He drew the loudest applause in calling for giving parents more choice in schools for their children, fighting drugs and crime, and condemning Mr. Clinton's veto of a bill to ban a rare late-term abortion procedure.

"When I get the partial birth abortion bill, I'll sign it. I won't veto it, I'll sign it," Sen. Dole said.

Shrinking water supply adds to world tension — study

WASHINGTON (R) — Dwindling water supplies are adding to tension in many regions of the world and the effect will increase in coming years, a Washington-based environmental group said Saturday.

By 2025, just a generation away, 40 per cent of the world's people will be living in countries experiencing chronic water shortages or water stress, the Worldwatch Institute said in a report.

"Political leaders are vastly underestimating the influence of water scarcity on food production, natural systems, and regional peace and stability," author Sandra Postel said.

She said tensions over water persist in the major river basins of the Middle East — the Jordan, the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates — as well as the Ganges in South Asia and the Aral Sea Basin.

"In some of these there is yet a treaty recognised by all the parties that allocates the basin's waters among them," the report, entitled *Dividing The Waters*, said.

It said at least 214 rivers flow through two or more countries, but no enforceable law governs the allocation of international fresh water.

In the Middle East, Israel recognised Palestinian rights to West Bank water for the first time in an agreement signed in September 1995, the report said.

But, on a per capita basis, Israeli settlers in the West Bank use about four times more water than their Palestinian neighbours, and pay about a third as much per cubic metre.

"Until such inequities are addressed and the larger issue of the permanent allocation of water rights is resolved, tensions will persist," the institute said.

In the Nile basin, a 1959 treaty between Egypt and Sudan allocates an amount of Nile water between them that adds up to nearly 90 per cent of the river's average annual flow — even though 86 per cent of that flow originates in Ethiopia.

"Now that Ethiopia is in a position to begin tapping Nile waters for its own development, an agreement to share the waters more equitably is essential for regional peace and stability," the group said.

Until now, countries have been able to make up water deficiencies by importing grain — described in the report as "virtual water."

It takes about 1,000 tonnes of water to grow one tonne of grain.

But with urban population projected to double to five billion by 2025, water in grain-producing countries is shifting from rural areas to cities, the report said.

"Where the water to meet future food needs is to come from on a sustainable basis is not obvious," Ms. Postel said.

EU asked to tick the box on its future

BRUSSELS (R) — Like students taking an exam, European Union countries will be asked this week to tick a box saying just how much power they are willing to surrender.

In a move to force the pace of negotiations on a new EU treaty, Ireland has asked its partners to explain in which circumstances they would be willing to cede their veto in favour of majority rule.

The current EU president has handed each country a five-page checklist to gauge what areas they may be willing to bend on the veto.

Negotiators, meeting in Brussels Monday and Tuesday, will be asked to tick boxes marked "Yes," "No" or "willing to consider further" next to some 50 areas where unanimity is currently required for the EU to take decisions.

They will also be asked to consider giving more power to the directly elected European Parliament in areas ranging from citizens' rights to development aid, and to consider possible changes to the European Court of Justice.

The two-day meeting is part of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on the bloc's future. Negotiators, who meet nearly every week, have been told to come up with a draft treaty by December so that a final document can be agreed in mid-1997.

EU leaders have called for a special summit in Dublin on Oct. 5 to discuss the progress of the IGC.

The issues on the agenda at this week's meeting are particularly sensitive in Britain, where the ruling Conservative Party is torn over the country's future in Europe.

London has vowed to fight any move to water down the veto, is generally sceptical about giving the parliament more power and wants some of the court's powers to be curbed.

But sharp differences also exist in other EU countries.

Many, despite agreeing that more majority voting is needed for a future bigger bloc to work efficiently, object to losing their veto in specific areas such as tax and foreign policy.

There is also a wide range of views about the desirability of promoting the parliament, France, for example, has little time for the body, while Germany considers it an essential element in EU democracy.

In a letter laying out the issues, the Irish presidency said the checklist was necessary because there was no agreement on an overall approach to decision making.

"It appears, therefore, that a case-by-case examination will be necessary to define areas where a move could be made from unanimity to a qualified-majority vote," it said.

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Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Back to confusion?

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to distinguish between written commitments made by former leaders Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres with the Palestinian side, which he says he will honour, and those verbally agreed to with the Syrians, which he claims to be not binding, is a hollow exercise in legal semantics. Netanyahu's credibility on this distinction is open for questioning because even with regard to the Oslo accords with the Palestinians, which are in writing, he seems to be hedging from his government's commitment by wavering on their implementation. With such a state of mind, the Israeli prime minister seems to be intent on diluting the legal importance of the late Rabin's "verbal" agreement to withdraw from the entire Golan Heights in return for security and political undertakings by Syria.

Israeli-Syrian negotiations in the past five years have apparently reached the critical stage of working out political understanding that include security arrangements on the Heights and the extent of normalisation between the two countries. For Netanyahu to claim that what Rabin had accepted has no legal force or effect is tantamount to the negation of basic legal and political norms governing talks between countries. What is at stake is the fate of peace negotiations between Israel and Syria and not who made the talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. What in effect Netanyahu is trying to tell the Arab side in general and Damascus in particular is that peace talks and agreements whether verbal or in writing are between governments and not states. To accept this novel submission would mean the rewriting of international norms. This is not to mention the risk of taking international relations back to the brink of chaos and confusion.

Against this backdrop, we believe that the Syrian-Israeli peace talks should pick up where they had left off. Israeli agreements whether written or oral are solemn commitments that Netanyahu should not even try to squirm himself out of. Washington will do the peace process a great deal of good if it succeeds in convincing Netanyahu to continue peace talks with Damascus on the basis of what was painstakingly agreed to between the two countries instead of starting anew as Netanyahu is suggesting. Otherwise, the Syrian government would be tempted to put its quest for peace on hold until a Labour-led government is back in power.

Syria is not likely to agree to something which is much less than what Rabin or Peres had accepted even if that would entail a long wait. If that is the case, comprehensive peace will continue to elude this region for a long time to come. And if regional peace must wait, so must regional development and the culture of peace that we are so eager to inculcate within the ranks of the peoples of the area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE VERY countries in the Arab region which Washington claims it wants to protect from Iraq have voiced their opposition to any aggression on that country, and announced they would never allow hostile forces to use their lands as a platform for aggression, said Fahd Al Faneh, a writer for Al Ra'i Sunday. Unlike 1990, when the United States succeeded in rallying the support of more than 30 nations behind its war against Iraq, this time Washington stands almost alone in the field, with its European allies objecting to its war-mongering policies, said the writer. Despite these facts the United States seems still determined to commit aggression, totally disregarding international laws and the views and feelings of the world community in general and the Arab countries in particular, he said. What looks clear to all is America's lust for war, destruction and murder of innocent Iraqi people; and what has been manifested to the world is Washington's arrogance and evil nature that prompt it to attack a Third World nation whose people seek to defend their soil and exercise their own rights on their own lands, continued the writer. The United States, he added, has no justification for its actions in Iraq, especially since the Kurds, who American claims to be trying to protect, have sided with the Baghdad government and since the Arab Gulf states, which Washington claims are facing Saddam Hussein's hostilities, have openly denounced any aggression on the Iraqi people. America's aggression, he said, is a war on the Arabs whose oil wealth continues to be pillaged and whose national interests are endangered.

A WRITER for Al Dustour discussed the situation at schools in remote regions like Tafleeh, Ma'an and the Jordan Valley, where there is shortage of teachers, especially at the secondary level. Mohammad Daoud said the Ministry of Education should realise that teachers shun these regions due to the lack of proper facilities, like housing and transport, and should therefore find the means to ensure uninterrupted school education and a sufficient number of teachers for all subjects. He suggested that the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for schools in all regions, create financial and other kinds of incentives to encourage teachers to serve in these regions. The writer also suggested that new graduates from teachers training colleges be forced to do one or two years service in the remote regions as a compulsory work and a requirement for appointment as teachers. By so doing, the ministry will be treating all schools fairly and justly and subsequently, he said, there can be no claim that there still exist less fortunate regions lacking proper education services.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusef Mansur

What foreign education and maids do to the economy

RECENTLY THERE has been some focus in the press on the impact of consumer spending on foreign services, claiming that such spending is bad for the economy and that reducing spending on imports would reduce the deficit in the balance of payments. On the face of it, this argument is true; however, it reeks of protectionism and some shallowness in analysis and thought, especially when the examples are made of spending on foreign education and maids.

One particular article claimed that it was a good omeo for Jordan that its spending on foreign education has been decreasing from a steady JD 69 million in the early nineties to JD 59 million last year and an expected JD 56 million this year. The author of the article went even as far as to claim that such spending on education distorts the overall economy.

Before an answer, as to whether the author's claim is correct or not, is attempted, one should trace the history and causes of spending on foreign education.

In the early seventies and until 1983, Jordanians invested heavily in education and those who could afford or whose children were not bright enough to get into a local university sent their children overseas for higher education. The reason is that Jordanians in the period 1973 to 1983 could find employment opportunities in the oil rich Arab countries and remit money home. They became Jordan's biggest export and if foreign education, which to many was the only way of getting instructed and ultimately a job in the Gulf, ultimately consumed the household's savings it was money spent for a good cause. It was creating those remittances to boost the economy. (In those years Jordan became known as an oil economy without the oil: if the oil prices went up, employment opportunities in the Gulf increased and Jordanians' welfare was boosted).

The educated Jordanians who went to the Gulf repatriated their savings to Jordan because the oil countries did not allow them to invest their savings locally. This created inflation and a greater demand for real estate — a sector which froze the country's savings in an unskilled, low employment opportunity creating sector. Instead of factories that could have provided excellent employment opportunities for our skilled labour for many years, investment went to villas that hired a few workers, of whom 90 per cent were unskilled and 50 per cent were foreign. Ultimately, neither the Gulf countries benefited greatly from their oil, nor did we; their savings were leaked outside to Jordan, Egypt and other non-oil producing countries; and instead of such savings being a primer for development, they went mainly to create inflation and a short-lived state of euphoria in several countries.

The present decrease in spending on foreign education may mean a host of things, any of which could be viewed as "bad" for the economy. Among those considerations: there are fewer and fewer jobs for Jordanians in the Gulf, which is a sad but obvious truism; Jordanian universities are accepting lower scores than in the past, which could mean that educational standards are inferior now for that; private universities are picking up the slack which is a good thing; Jordanians' incomes are lower now than they were in the past, which means that they have negative or zero savings and therefore cannot afford to send their children abroad for a good education; there is pessimism about the future and parents choose to keep their savings and children at home; Jordanians no longer view their children as their social security and opt to keep their savings; people no longer view education as the key to social mobility because "education no longer pays, a piece of land pays much more"; and many other things that one could easily select from the surrealism that surrounds the average day of the average Jordanian.

Several articles have addressed the question of maids,

an imported service which in the view of many serves to drain the national economy. However, beyond simple calculations, they must address the sources of demand for such a service. Because even after accounting for those who have maids just to "keep up with the Jones's," one will still find that many who have maids do so because of a genuine need.

In this day and age when inflation looms heavy and unemployment is still high, a family is forced to have more than one wage earner and ultimately husband and wife must work. The maid fulfills, albeit not perfectly, those duties in which one of the spouses could have invested his/her time for a lower return than that he/she could have possibly earned in the market place. Thus, having maids frees the time of local talent and allows it the opportunity to seek greater employment which, in turn, leads to higher output and a greater GDP.

Furthermore, the existence of maids is a signal that women are being liberated and joining the labour force as partners and competitors to men. Indeed this is a great sign for the society as a whole and women in particular. In other words, it may be good that Jordanians have maids.

"The educated Jordanians who went to the Gulf repatriated their savings to Jordan because the oil countries did not allow them to invest their savings locally. This created inflation and a greater demand for real estate — a sector which froze the country's savings in an unskilled, low employment opportunity creating sector. Instead of factories that could have provided excellent employment opportunities for our skilled labour for many years, investment went to villas that hired a few workers, of whom 90 per cent were unskilled and 50 per cent were foreign."

In all the articles that have recently been printed about the deficit in the balance of payments, none focused on the other way of reducing the deficit, namely, by increasing exports. That because it is always easier, and lazier, just to bury one's head in the sand and say "let's protect our economy by closing it." It is more difficult to search for quality improvement methods and institute them to bring about that desired change.

Outcries for protectionism know no national boundary. They are common to all nations and they are extremely dangerous because they give the average person that excuse to blame others for domestic, home-made ailments. Instead of quality home-made products. But then, when will we stop blaming the maid for everything.

Bahrain contains unrest but problems remain

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain has contained unrest among members of its majority Shi'ite Muslim community after nearly two years of violence dented its image as the Gulf's main banking and financial hub, officials and diplomats say.

The smallest and least wealthy of the Gulf Arab states is enjoying a quiet time after security forces cracked down on dissidents who launched waves of arson attacks, sabotage and riots to demand political and economic reforms.

But major problems remain unresolved, mainly the questions of unemployment and elections to local councils, say diplomats and bankers.

They say that although the violence has died down and business has returned to normal, the Sunni-dominated government has yet to address issues behind the unrest.

"There are a number of problems the government of Bahrain has to address. And until they do so and find constructive conclusions, the government will still face problems," one diplomat told Reuters.

"The major problem is economic...A lot of people are either unemployed or are low-paid workers," the diplomat said, adding "I don't think there is really poverty in Bahrain."

"People feel there is a gap between the rich and poor in Bahrain and other Gulf Arab states. The government of Bahrain has to find a way to bridge that gap if it

wants to maintain stability."

Bahraini officials say 1.4 per cent of a total workforce of 239,000, or about 3,300, is unemployed. Independent economists put the figure at 10 to 15 per cent.

Diplomats said Bahrain had started to think seriously about the damage unemployment could inflict on the economy if no efforts were made to contain it.

"I think some of Bahrain's neighbours are also facing the same problem. They don't have (enough) money to solve all their economic problems," one diplomat said.

Officials said Bahrain had embarked on a drive to find more jobs for Bahrainis to combat rising unemployment, a major reason behind civil unrest which erupted in December 1994. Labour and social affairs undersecretary Sheikh Ahmed Bin Sager Al Khalifa said recently that a bureau his ministry created in July to help Bahrainis find jobs had found work for about 800 people in one month.

Officials said projects worth 900 million dinars (\$2.39 billion) were in the pipeline including a power station, a bridge, a sea port and tourism and services projects.

Bankers said although Bahrain would remain the main financial and banking centre in the Gulf and the Middle East, it could not count on the sector for employing more Bahrainis.

Coming out of the hard times

By Ayman Al Safadi

THE KABARITI government is facing some difficult times. But the dilemma is not entirely its making. A major reason for the government's headache is the noise that political aspirants and competitors are making. But there is little that Mr Kabariti or his government can do to stop this noise. Politicians are always out to discredit each other. Those outside office want to go back to it.

The government is, however, partially responsible for what some like to describe as a crisis. It would be naive to think that the government could have passed the decision to lift bread subsidies without expending some political capital. Higher bread prices mean lower popularity, and a vulnerable side which opponents can attack.

The government's mistake, many now contend, was in the packaging of the subsidies decision, especially right before implementing it. In the days leading to the riots in Karak, the government appeared as if it had ignored Parliament, as if it had underestimated the impact of the decision on the people, and their reaction to it.

But the decision was forced by economic necessities. And that will eventually sink in, given time and better ways of getting the message across to the people.

The Kabariti government can stage a comeback. But that it will need to do within a global vision translated into a clear strategy.

But if Mr Kabariti tries to make the comeback on the basis of appeasing, or winning, the political pundits and aspirants, he will be going an unnecessary, and not certainly successful, distance. Political parties can cause headache. But they cannot behead. Apart from the Islamic Action Front (IAF), political parties cannot claim the representation of even one per cent of the population. If they challenge that, let them publish the sizes of their memberships.

As for the Islamists, they can probably contribute more to political life in the country if they remain out of the government. In the opposition, the IAF can act as a watchdog on the executive and force it to take note of differing views. Bringing the Islamists in will help neither the government nor the IAF. The agendas of Mr Kabariti and the Islamists cannot, in the long run, be reconciled. A temporary cohabitation can only complicate things for the government and the country.

Mr Kabariti can live with opposition. Better said, the country cannot live without opposition.

Mr Kabariti will be better off staging his comeback by directly going to the people. His efforts should aim at convincing the citizens that his government's policies will ultimately serve them. There is not much the government can do about the economic hardships the people are facing. The resources simply do not exist. But the government, through hard work, can convince people that it is addressing the concerns that can be redressed.

Human rights can be respected more. Democratic practices can be strengthened. Bureaucracy can be fought. The Mercedes Benz can be sold. Television can broadcast some reports about real problems with which people are grappling, and, this time around, tell the truth as naked as it comes.

One more point. The government should speed up the fight against corruption, give evidence that this fight has, as it says, been started. There is official, though private, talk about the government's success in "coding the services" of a senior official because of his alleged corruption. The people need, first, to know that the government did this. Second, if the official was corrupt, the people are entitled to see justice take its course. Send him to court.

One thing about Mr Kabariti's government is that it has not been able to take credit for the quite a few positive things it has done to its short life to office. Maybe a thorough reassessment process is due. Maybe the Kabariti government should start doing what all governments do: Sell itself better.

The writer is a Jordan Times staff member.

LETTERS

Foreign investment welcome?

To the Editor:

HAVING READ Maria Bizri's article "Popular Fuheis restaurant comes under community fire" (Jordan Times Sept. 9, 1996) prompts me to write a few things about investment in Jordan.

At the beginning of 1996 — after several visits over the past five years — I arrived here full of enthusiasm about Jordan's encouragement to invest. I was lulled by the openness and friendliness of the Jordanian people, its culture and beautiful, rich countryside. Now, nine months later, my "naive" attitude has changed and I feel betrayed by the country's promise.

With the help of family and friends residing in Jordan, I found a beautiful house, with old heritage character, in the Ruw'ayq Al Balqa area of Fuheis. I thought of turning it into a cozy restaurant, away from the hustle and bustle of Amman. The whole area consisted of several shops and the Zuwadeh restaurant within a tourist area. I informed the local municipality of my intended project.

The site was originally infested with rats, had no roof and the building was in danger of collapsing due to water leakage everywhere. So it came as a surprise that the main concern of the municipality was to remove the over 100-year-old wall only to increase the width of the adjacent road by — believe it or not — 80 centimetres. My argument of respect for old heritage was completely ignored. I came to realise, only much later that my enthusiastic argumentation put me at war with the local mayor who gave me the impression that I, as a foreigner, was in no position to decide these matters. Actually I realised that the definition of foreigner includes even any Jordanian not from the local community.

Anyway, my Jordanian partners and I abided by the order regarding the wall, but there was more to follow: I had grown wiser in not to upset the customary dealings as a foreigner and trusted my partners' advice and the mayor's promise to grant us a restaurant licence as soon as renovations were finished. The works were completed with help from experienced locals. And as never during the renovation work did we receive or get the impression of resentment against our project by the local municipality, it came as a great shock for us when at the end of a lot of hard work we were neither granted a permit nor an answer in writing.

Instead, we were manoeuvred into a game of bureau-

cracy (name any ministry in Amman and I will take you there in a second). The nightmare of inefficient and unprofessional bureaucratic procedures had started. To accelerate and emphasise our urgent matter we delivered back-and-forth correspondence by hand and reminded civil servants with numerous phone calls that our case was still unresolved. It remained that way and every time we came back to whatever ministry, they could not believe that we had not progressed one single inch.

Then our hopes were raised — again by the mayor — asking us into his office. He gave us his word that within 48 hours he would give us the licence if we would donate JD 10,000 to the community of Fuheis. We agreed as we found that the whole community should benefit from these tourism projects. We asked to put this agreement in writing to make sure of its validity for both parties. This was never done and we never got to see the licence.

Our "bureaucratic career" kept going on. We lost the whole summer season although we had put two consistent months of overtime work into the project. We faced a lot of embarrassment in losing several reservation contracts by big companies of local and tourist character. Never doubting that we would receive our licence, weeks and weeks passed. The opening day, which was eagerly awaited by many people, never happened. We were dragged into the big and inefficient bureaucratic apparatus and never managed to get out. Now, five months have passed and our large investment which we had worked hard for during the past years is looking very insecure.

My attitude towards life and business hopes here in Jordan has completely changed. I am still emotionally and politically attached to this country. Is it a paradox that one can love and at the same time hate this place. Love because of its people and heritage. Hate because of its never ending bureaucracy triggered by one mayor's discontent.

Corinna Morcos,
Jubeiha.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

September 16, 1996
g out of
rd time

Regent: Why the same approach to solving Yugoslavia conflict is not adopted in efforts to end Iraq crisis?

(Continued from page 1)

there are factions who were supported by outside forces, and it appears by their actions, in some way, to secure the continued interference of Iraq's neighbours in its affairs. The question of use of force in the south of Iraq, poses the dilemma: Is the south important for oil? Or is it an alternative target for the military planners? I think the feeling here in the Arab states, oil is ultimately the concern, and as far as the region is concerned, dual containment, whether of Iraq or Iran has failed. We call for a comprehensive and clear regional security order, and wonder why the oil issue cannot be addressed in the broader context of the stability of the larger Gulf. In terms of international legality, the U.N. has been marginalised.

"If we are talking about democratic policies of the

U.S., clearly then, the U.S. foreign policy should also be democratic in terms of our exchanges. As far as we are concerned, we are living in the region and we have to live with the consequences of the military action. In the last few years, instead of achieving consensus on the cultural and economic identities, we have almost one million children dying in Iraq according to U.N. figures. Our criticism of U.S. foreign policy is within the already existing lack of consensus in the Security Council, and the divisions in the EU and the Arab League. Our fear is rather than containing the image of Saddam in the international community, a new lease of publicity has been provided for him. The use of a blunt instrument without a clear strategy makes one wonder about the direction, the whole region is heading for."

"His Majesty has always

shown statesmanship, and my role has always been in terms of my involvement in development issues and the economic challenges of the last two decades. It shouldn't be expected from a country that neighbours a sanctioned one, as the case of Yugoslavia, to commit economic suicide just by virtue of the fact that a war has broken out and a neighbouring country has been sanctioned. As far as we are concerned, the peace dividend with Israel has not yet developed the momentum that we would like to see, in terms of free trade, and investment climate. But we hope in the future, that goodwill will be translated into meaningful trade partnership to include Iraq, which is Jordan's depth, inasmuch as Jordan is Iraq's depth."

"In terms of containing

the assistance as well as the initiatives of the Spanish government in this field are much appreciated."

"We hope that in our participation in the Euro-Med dialogue discussions more substance will emerge in the future."

"I am worried that the human content of peace-making is being ignored. For peacemaking must be seen in terms of comprehensiveness of the right of return of refugees and their compensation. Despite the existence of refugees in (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the PNA), the term refugees is not being mentioned anymore. I must emphasise that the right of self-determination is indivisible."

"In Yugoslavia, the international community is exploring the potential of a rotating presidency, while in Iraq, the issue is still that of, exploring the possibilities of succession. Nobody talks about, bow pluralism

can be achieved. This type of rhetoric can only increase the potential of religious extremism in the area."

"In the context of Jordanian-Gulf relations, Japan was the only country in the OECD in 1989 in its parliament to talk of the hinterland countries, and the oil Gulf states must develop a concept of interdependence with their neighbours if they want to control the borders of extremism in the politico-economic dimension. Jordan will do everything it can to develop its good relations with all Arab countries and we expect correspondingly a desire to work with the absolute, and a desire to neutralise political considerations from economic realities, if we are to become a region. For South East Asia has a region, and united Europe has a region."

U.S. issues new warning to Iraq as negotiations intensify

(Continued from page 1)

frightening Iraq," the ruling Baath Party's Al Thawra said.

The United States fired 44 cruise missiles at military sites in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4 after Iraqi troops moved into Kurdish-dominated northern Iraq.

The U.S. military buildup came as Russia, France and China were involved in intense efforts to contain tension between Iraq and the United States, diplomatic sources in Baghdad said Sunday.

"Russian officials have stepped up their efforts in recent hours to prevent new U.S. strikes against Iraq, as part of Moscow's recent initiative," one diplomat said.

Among the U.S. assets in place, Patriot missile crews — about 125 soldiers — have been ordered to Saudi Arabia where they will man a prepositioned missile battery to protect against Iraqi Scud missile attacks.

Four B-52 bombers have been moved to the island Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, within range of Iraq, and the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise is joining the carrier USS Carl Vinson in the Gulf region.

The destroyer USS Stump, capable of firing Tomahawk cruise missiles, has also joined the Fifth Fleet in the region as part of its normal rotation.

Mr. Perry said the 23 F16 planes to be based in Bahrain would be involved in enforcing the "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq.

"Just yesterday we had

conducted more than 100 sorties over southern Iraq," Mr. Perry said.

Discussing the allied warplanes' Operation Southern Watch in general, Mr. Perry said:

"That operation has been challenged by the Iraqis. They had challenged it by reconstituting air defence units in the area, they challenged it by moving mobile ... missiles in the area. They challenged it by firing six missiles at an airplane."

Mr. Perry's statement about the challenges was at first misinterpreted to refer to new attacks on U.S. planes since Iraq said Friday that it would stop such firings. However, Mr. Perry was referring to the overall mission.

"We will not tolerate threats to our air crews and anything that Iraq does to threaten our air crews will meet with a very strong response," Mr. Perry said.

Defense Department spokesman Lt. Scott Campbell confirmed that Mr. Perry was referring to earlier attacks on U.S. warplanes.

Although Bahrain agreed to host the F-16s, Mr. Perry was not able to obtain permission from Kuwait to deploy 5,000 additional U.S. troops in that emirate. U.S. officials had said previously that the troops were being sent from Fort Hood, Texas, but that operation was put on hold.

"I have not authorised that deployment order and will not until I get the authorisation of the Kuwaiti government," Mr. Perry said just before leaving

ing Kuwait for Bahrain.

Mr. Perry said he had sought permission from Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, who said the request would be discussed by Kuwait's defence committee.

Asked if a fresh round of strikes against Iraq were still possible, Mr. Perry said, "Yes, it is still a possibility."

Kuwait last week agreed to host a batch of U.S. F-117A Stealth attack planes, a move that prompted harsh criticism from Iraq.

Kuwait's blocking the troop deployment, at least temporarily, was something of an about face after its bellicose comments of recent days.

On Saturday, Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Sabah revived Kuwait's call for the ouster of President Saddam.

With other Arab countries objecting to further attacks on Iraq, Kuwait may be getting cold feet, said Abdul Rida Asiri, a political science professor at Kuwait University.

Kuwait is "apprehensive about the Arab reaction" and wants to consult its regional allies before deciding whether to allow the troop deployment, Mr. Asiri said.

Before visiting Kuwait, Mr. Perry was in Saudi Arabia, where some 5,000 U.S. military personnel are based. But the Saudis have not allowed the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

As U.S. ships and planes were headed to the Middle East in a show of force,

members of a 1,200-strong American contingent already in Kuwait fired live artillery rounds Saturday in military exercises near the Iraqi border.

Iraqi troops were so close to the Kuwait border that the U.S. troops on the other side heard their artillery fire. The Iraqi troops apparently were conducting their own exercises.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and his top commanders have taken refuge in Iran following their defeat by a rival Kurdish group in northern Iraq, Kurdish and Iranian sources said Sunday.

Mr. Talabani, who was driven out of his stronghold in the town of Sulaimaniyah on Sept. 9 by fighters of the "Iraqi-allied" Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), is trying to reorganise his forces, the sources said.

"Mr. Talabani ... is in Iranian Kurdistan and is moving around the border region" meeting with his followers, one of the sources said.

Tens of thousands of Kurds fled northern Iraq for the border with Iran following the KDP's military offensive, fearing a return of Iraqi control over the region Iraq following a five-year hiatus.

Several Iranian correspondents said Mr. Talabani had been sighted in the Banah region of Iranian Kurdistan.

Among the top PUK leaders who have taken refuge in Iran are the commander in chief of PUK forces

Chokat Haj Mochir, the director of PUK television Abbas Abdu Razagh and Abdul Ghabbar Aziz Ali, minister of reconstruction in the "Kurdish government," which is not recognised internationally, the sources said.

In a statement Thursday, the PUK claimed that Mr. Talabani was still in Iraqi Kurdistan and a PUK spokesman in London said he remained in the Sulaimaniyah region.

Hundreds of Kurds clutching suitcases crossed the Turkish border on Sunday at the start of an evacuation by pro-U.S. Iraqis who fear Baghdad's increased influence in northern Iraq, witnesses said.

The Kurds, brought to the border in a fleet of battered buses and jeeps, walked across the Habur Bridge crossing for passage to Turkey from where they were to be processed for asylum in the United States.

"I feel great. I just want to get across that bridge," said a refugee who identified himself only as Moyyad. A Turkish tank waited on the other side of the border.

As many as 2,500 Iraqi Kurds were to be relocated to a camp in the Turkish town of Silopi. Most worked as employees of U.S. aid programmes and the U.S.-led air operation patrolling a no-fly zone in northern Iraq. But some are believed to have been engaged in intelligence activities for the Americans.

Happiness may lie in your stars

By Daniel Goleman

NEW YORK — When it comes to that quintessential American passion, the pursuit of happiness, the news from science is mixed.

The good news is that the sting of life's slings and arrows is surprisingly short. The bad news is for vacationers: the mellow glow from a week or two away will fade just as surely.

Happiness, many psychologists are concluding, seems to be largely determined by the genes, not by outside reality. However, tragic or comic life's ups and downs, people appear to return inexorably to whatever happiness level is pre-set in their constitution.

many other variables that researchers have sought to correlate with contentment. Each factor may make a person a little happier, but it has a minor impact, compared with the individual's characteristic sense of well-being.

"We find that for events like being promoted or losing a lover, most of the effect on people's mood is gone by three months, and there's not a trace by six months," said Dr. Edward Diener, a psychologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana. Dr. Diener, with his wife, Dr. Carol Diener, also a psychologist there, proposed the notion of a happiness set point in the May issue of the journal Psychological Science.

the variation within each pair of twins. Dr. Lykken said.

"Those in prestigious positions or professions were not happier than those who went to work in overalls, nor were those who finished their Ph.D.s happier than those who never completed eighth grade. You can predict happiness levels vastly better just by knowing the other, identical twin's score."

Still, doubts remain about the set-point idea. Dr. Howard Weiss, a psychologist at Purdue University, takes issue with Dr. Lykken's estimate that about 50 per cent of a person's sense of well-being is due to an inherited set point.

Forget those if-only-I-could-win-the-lottery-I'd-find-happiness-forever fantasies," Dr. Edward Diener cites data showing that lottery winners are no happier a year after their good fortune than they were before.

The set-point concept has been seized by some genetics researchers, who say new data on twins give the strongest support to date for that idea.

"About half of your sense of well-being is determined by your set point, which is from the genetic lottery, and the other half from the sorrows and pleasures of the last hours, days or weeks," said Dr. David T. Lykken, a behavioural geneticist at the University of Minnesota who published results from a study of 1,500 pairs of twins in the May issue of Psychological Science. His estimates are based on comparing how members of pairs of fraternal and identical twins rate their sense of well-being.

A common way to estimate how much of a trait is based on genetics is to look at the similarities that show up in identical twins, who share their genes 100 per cent, compared with fraternal twins, who are no more similar genetically than any other siblings.

"There is little difference in well-being among identical twins raised together, compared with those raised apart," said Dr. Auke Tellegen of the University of Minnesota, a co-author of the study with Dr. Lykken. Life circumstances, like salary, education or marital status, predicted only 2 per cent of

the idea is similar to the set-point concept in weight control, a theory that says the brain seems to be wired to turn the body's metabolism up or down to maintain a pre-set weight.

There is also, these scientists contend, a set point for happiness, a genetically determined mood level that the vagaries of life may nudge upward or downward, but only for a while. With time, the grouchy tend to become as cranky as before, and the lighthearted cheery again.

Interviews with a range of psychologists show that the idea of a biological set point for a sense of well-being has wide support in the field, though there are quibbles on details.

"It's a brilliant idea — it's well-worth pursuing," said Dr. Jerome Kagan, a developmental psychologist at Harvard University who has studied temperament in children. "It's clear that T.S. Eliot was by nature dour, and Jay Leno is congenitally upbeat. But we are far from filling in the biological blanks."

The set-point idea seems to make sense of longstanding data on happiness that have puzzled researchers. Some of the studies simply take people's word for how happy they are, while others use less direct measures — like observing how exuberant they are.

Studies of happiness in several countries have found that money makes little difference to perceptions of happiness, except among the very poor. Nor do education, marriage and a family, or any of the

international hereditarian estimate based on a single study has to be viewed with caution," Dr. Weiss said.

"Though no one is disputing a part of your satisfaction in life is due to genetic factors, we don't really know yet if it's 25 per cent, 50 per cent or 75 per cent."

The idea that a person's typical mood persists over time has been borne out by data from several large studies that followed people over many years. One is the National Health and Nutrition Examination, which monitored reports of well-being from close to 6,000 men and women over 10 years.

"We find that the people who are relatively happier now will be the happiest 10 years from now, despite the day-to-day fluctuations," said Dr. Robert R. McCrae, a research psychologist at the National Institute on Aging. Dr. Lykken sees in his data a recipe for living that calls for nudging one's level of happiness into the higher registers of one's range. Dr. Lykken's advice:

"Be an experiential epicure. A steady diet of simple pleasures will keep you above your set point. Find the small things that you know give you a little high — a good meal, working in the garden, time with friends — and sprinkle your life with them. In a long-run, that will leave you happier than some grand achievement that gives you a big lift-for a while."

International Herald Tribune

First results expected today

(Continued from page 1)

independent monitoring group told AFP: "We think the turnout is lower" — around 50 per cent.

The ruling SDA Muslim party late Saturday called for results in Serb-held Bosnia to be declared invalid, citing media restrictions and the Serbs' failure to allow Muslims to return.

Richard Holbrooke, the architect of Bosnia's Dayton peace accords, said Saturday he had not seen "anything as yet that would make these elections invalid," dismissing the protest as "no big deal" which would be dealt with.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic gave a qualified welcome to the vote which in many parts of the country "provided Bosnian citizens with the real opportunity to express their democratic will."

But in a reference to his SDA's protest he added: "Some of our political parties have already expressed their grave concern."

Bosnian Serb officials meanwhile suspended the ballot count in Serb-run areas Sunday citing "irregularities" concerning overseas postal bal-

lots. Some 640,000 Bosnians registered to vote abroad.

Sir Kenneth Scott, vice-chairman of the provisional elections commission for Bosnia said the move had been sparked by "a genuine misunderstanding" that was later resolved. An OSCE official here later confirmed counting had resumed.

Early Sunday, Holbrooke held talks in Belgrade with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, late announcing in Sarajevo that the presidents of Bosnia and Serbia would meet in Paris within three weeks, "to develop diplomatic relations."

Milosevic, who signed the Dayton peace accords on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs, his one-time protégé, is widely regarded as the instigator of the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

The vote was characterised by a huge return of Bosnian Serbs to areas controlled by the Serb republic in Bosnia, and a trickle of Muslim and Croat voters returning to cast their ballots in areas, now under Serb control, from which they were "ethnically cleansed."

Arabs warn Israel ties would suffer

(Continued from page 1)

of the foreign ministers' meeting, which was held in Cairo.

Conflicts reportedly emerged in the meeting, which is held twice a year under the auspices of the 22-member Arab League.

At a session Saturday, the Libyan and Syrian foreign ministers blamed Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for the stalemate.

"The situation now is a logical outcome of failing to coordinate with the Arabs," Mr. Sharaa said.

Egyptian officials said meanwhile that U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross should bring new proposals to help unblock the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks during his forthcoming tour of the region.

Ross will carry with him certain ideas and we hope he will come with a clear

vision concerning all the tracks, including the Palestinian track," said senior Egyptian presidential advisor Osama Al Baz.

"We cannot concentrate on only one track of the peace process," he said.

Mr. Ross is expected to visit Israel and Syria next week in a bid to re-launch their peace negotiations which have been stalled since February.

The State Department said Wednesday that the United States would pass on certain information to Syria following the visit to Washington this month of Mr. Netanyahu.

"We have produced some ideas that we hope might lead to progress and convince Israel and Syria that they ought to reinstate conversations," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

Mr. Baz stressed that it

was up to Israel to take "positive and concrete steps over the next few weeks to reactivate the peace process which the Jewish state has plunged into a serious crisis."

Meanwhile Syria's Sharaa said his country had not been informed of any U.S.-Israeli proposal to resume negotiations with Damascus.

"Any proposal which is far from Syria's vision is unacceptable," he said after talks with Mr. Mubarak.

Mr. Sharaa reiterated that Syria was ready to resume peace talks with Israel from where they stopped in February "based on the principle of trading land for peace."

"The negotiations will only be unblocked if Israel changes its intransigent policy," Mr. Sharaa said.

Police keep tight lid

(Continued from page 12)

husband to work at 6:45 a.m.

Neighbours said that they saw the two children playing on the balcony of their third floor apartment at 7:00 a.m.

When the mother returned home at 7:15 to take them to school she tried to open the front door and found her daughter's body blocking the entrance.

She then discovered her son's defunct body in his bedroom.

Officials have ruled out the possibility of food poisoning.

Algerian parties sign anti-terrorism accord

(Continued from page 1)

the Algerian national interest."

But above all, he made clear that the government's stance on fundamentalism has not softened, warning that Algeria cannot tolerate the "criminal and barbarous" action of the extremists.

"I renew my appeal to those who have strayed, to those who have been deceived, to respond to their minds and their place in the country," Mr. Zeroual said.

"The band of clemency has been grasped by a significant number of the lost. This hand is still extended

and they can still take it," he added.

The text of the treaty, entitled a "platform for national understanding," sets out the framework principles for a policy statement rejecting violence, and affirms adherence to "political pluralism ... and respect for the constitution and laws of the republic."

Signatories representing 19 parties on the National Transitional Council, along with eight parties which have taken part in a "dialogue" with Mr. Zeroual in recent months, seven national organisations including the trade union organisation UGTA, and

four other delegates, signed the document under the president's gaze.

The wording of the text was not discussed by the conference, delegates being allowed simply to make short speeches.

Mr. Zeroual said he was satisfied with the "sense of responsibility and the spirit of harmony" which provided "proof of our national cohesion despite certain cyclical differences."

While the government media hailed the conference on Sunday, independent newspapers voiced scepticism. The privately owned Al Watan described it as "a difficult accord to seal."

Iraq voices satisfaction over Arab position

(Continued from page 1)

ahead with plans to set up a "security zone" in northern Iraq.

"Syria rejects any step which Turkey might take on the ground such as the creation of security zones. These are measures that set the stage for the division of Iraq," Mr. Sharaa said.

Turkey said it wanted to set up the buffer zone to stop infiltrations from Iraq of rebels of the Turkish Kurdish Labour Party

(PKK), which has been locked in a violent struggle with Ankara since 1984 to set up a separatist state in southeast Turkey.

On Saturday the Arab League underlined its "strong condemnation of the interference by some neighbouring countries in the internal affairs of an Arab state member of the Arab League council," in reference to Iraq.

It also expressed "its extreme concern because of the foreign interference that

threatens the unity, security and territory of Iraq," in a clear reference to the United States which is building troops in the region.

Mr. Sahaf dismissed as "completely unjustified" U.S. cruise missile attacks on his country earlier this month and said a U.S. troop build-up in the region was "a show of muscle."

"This superpower is acting in a very hysterical way," he said.

IMF: World economy sound, but problems could arise in Europe

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The world economy is basically sound but problems could arise due to lackluster growth in Europe, the deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said.

"It looks reasonably good," Stanley Fisher said of the international economy at a press conference to release the fund's annual report.

"There is low inflation in the Group of Seven (G-7) countries (Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States) and the Japanese recovery is underway," he said.

"If there are difficulties, they could be associated with the possibility that growth in Europe doesn't happen in combination with the need to meet the Maastricht criteria for a unified currency."

The European Union (EU) wants to introduce a unified currency in 1999.

The fund is expected to publish its semi-annual report on the world economic outlook on Sept. 25. The IMF called on the United States to postpone tax cuts until real progress

has been made toward balancing the federal budget.

The IMF said fund directors were concerned that budget plans presented by both the Clinton Administration and the Republican-led Congress placed the priority on tax rather than expenditure cuts.

It warned that such a procedure "would delay much of the deficit reduction until the end of a seven- or 10-year period."

"Directors felt it would be desirable to defer the introduction of any tax cuts until visible progress had been made toward balancing the budget," the report said.

The IMF urged Washington to take steps to boost domestic savings, reduce the national debt and roll back inflation.

The report chided the United States for its reliance on sanction threats as a means of settling trade disputes.

While bailing Washington's support for trade liberalisation, "directors regretted that frequent recourse by the United States to unilateral trade actions risked undermining these cooperative efforts."

The IMF "encouraged" the U.S. authorities to make more active use of existing multilateral procedures, and hoped that any future trade disputes could be resolved without threats of trade sanctions.

Fund directors also credited the U.S. Federal Reserve, or central bank, for its monetary policies in 1994 and early 1995, notably for having tightened credit ahead of an increase in price pressures.

The IMF bailed China's "impressive" economic performance, notably its move toward an open market and efforts to curb runaway growth. "Directors welcomed China's continued impressive economic performance and ... moves toward a market-based system, to strengthen macro-economic management and to further integrate the country into the global economy," the report said.

The IMF noted that inflation in China had been reduced from 25 per cent in October 1994 to around eight per cent by the end of 1995, while real growth in gross domestic product moderated from 12 per cent

in 1994 to 10 per cent last year.

IMF officials "commended the successful moderation of growth and demand toward more sustainable rates and reduction of inflation to single digits."

But the report disclosed that the IMF remained "concerned at the decline in the ratio of fiscal revenue to GDP, which had necessitated a compression in budgetary expenditure."

Given its strong external position, China could now afford to speed up trade liberalisation, according to the IMF. "Directors attached particular importance to reducing quantitative restrictions and liberalising foreign trading rights," the report said. It argued that a campaign to reform state-owned enterprises would require "intensified efforts to establish a social safety net and to encourage labour mobility in the non-state sector." The fund also urged Chinese authorities to reduce subsidies and other financial support to state firms.

Arab fiscal policies block investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states need to carry out more reforms to attract foreign capital because their fiscal policies are still dissuading the investment needed for economic growth, an Arab official has said.

By the end of 1994, Arab investors had nearly \$850 billion in overseas assets while capital inflow into the region stood at only \$1.7 billion compared with the world's total private capital of \$225 billion, said Saleh Humaidan, general manager of the Arab Investment Company (AIC).

"This means the share of Arab states from direct international investment did not exceed 0.8 per cent in 1994 compared with an

average 3.4 per cent during the 1980s," he wrote in the United Arab Emirates economic weekly Al Eqtisadi.

"There are still several obstacles for foreign investment in the Arab countries although many of them are carrying out reform programmes," he pointed out.

"One of the main reasons is the unstable financial and monetary policies in some members as this is leading to inflation and fluctuation in exchange rates, and consequently erosion in the invested funds," Mr. Humaidan indicated.

Egypt, Jordan and several other Arab countries have been locked in reforms at the request of the International Monetary Fund to tackle their long-

standing economic woes, including debt, inflation, unemployment and financial deficits.

In the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and other oil producers have also embarked on reforms to repair economic damage caused by weak oil prices.

Arab officials have often called for the repatriation of part of the overseas investment to ensure the success of reforms. But only a fraction of those funds, based on returned.

"The incentives for investment in the Arab World are either insufficient or are not being implemented," said Mr. Humaidan, whose Riyadh-based group is owned by the governments of 15 of the 22-member Arab League.

"The stock exchanges are also suffering from legislative and organisational problems while investment scopes for the private sector are still narrow because of the domination of the state over a large part of economic sectors," Mr. Humaidan said.

Improvement of the investment climate was essential for the success of reforms as returning funds would provide financing for development projects and allow regional states to avert high-cost borrowing.

"Capital flow into the Arab region is very important as it will not result in a large increase in debts, especially after the total Arab foreign debt reached nearly \$250 billion at the end of 1995," he said.

IMF to scrap \$4b of Egyptian debt next month

CAIRO (AFP) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is to sign an agreement with Egypt next month scrapping repayment of debt estimated at some \$4 billion, President Hosni Mubarak has said.

"The new agreement with the International Monetary Fund concerning the removal of the third slice of Egypt's debt will be signed

on Oct. 11," President Mubarak told the ruling National Democratic Party newspaper Mayo.

The agreement will allow Egypt to obtain from the Paris Club of Nations which finances IMF development loans the annulment of the third and last slice of Egyptian debt estimated at around \$4 billion. In August, following a trip to Washington during which he met IMF officials, President Mubarak announced that Egypt had reached an agreement with the international lending institution to scrap the debt.

He stressed that the accord should not be seen as an additional burden on the population nor should it lead to an increase in the cost of public services or staple foods.

Egypt launched in 1991, with the cooperation of the IMF, a programme to reform the economy through a series of privatisations.

In 1994, citing the slowness of the programme, the IMF refused to forgive Egypt's debt.

But President Mubarak told Mayo that Egypt was determined to go ahead with its economic reforms programme.

"We are now reaping the fruit of the economic reforms without which we would not have been able to rely upon for our economic development and to attract investments," President Mubarak said in the interview.

He cited as an example the

High interest rates could throttle Indian growth — central bank

BOMBAY (AFP) — Bank lending rates in India are still too high and could throttle economic activity if not brought down to "reasonable" levels, the country's central bank has warned.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its annual report that the hardening of lending rates during the fiscal year to March 1996 was a matter of serious concern.

It argued that "with the decline in the inflation rate, the real rates of interest are in double digits which is clearly unsustainable, given the expected growth of the economy."

With inflation at around five per cent, demand for bank credit could be forced down and "eventually lead to decline in activity," the RBI said.

"Escalation of interest rates would hurt the financial system and it is essential that banks charge reasonable leading rates that balance the demand for and supply of funds," said the bank.

The RBI noted that banks had eased prime lending rates by 0.5 percentage point recently "but in view of the low inflation rate, further reductions are necessary."

India's largest bank, the state-owned State Bank of India, last week said it was cutting lending rates to top-rated borrowers by 0.5 percentage point to 15.5 per cent.

Other banks are expected to follow. But analysts pointed out only a handful of top blue-chip companies get money at 16 per cent a year while others have to pay rates of between 19 and 35 per cent.

Analysts said lending rates have been at "unsustainably high levels" for the past 18 months as huge

market borrowings by federal and state governments had starved corporates of funds, even though industry grew at an annual rate of 12 per cent.

Banks are currently flush with funds as corporations are unwilling to borrow at such high rates. The RBI said government borrowings from the market continued to be high and could keep lending rates at high levels.

"The quantum of government borrowing from the market has remained excessively high and net borrowings in 1995-96 was at a high of 267 billion rupees (\$7.62 billion)."

"Net government market borrowings for 1996-97 have been budgeted at 254 billion rupees (\$7.25 billion). The large market borrowing would have the potential adverse effect of very high real rates of interest, in view of the distinctly lower

inflation rate," said the RBI.

Meanwhile, India is raising the ceiling on foreign equity participation in non-core industries to 74 per cent.

"We are raising the limit (on foreign direct investment) up to 74 per cent for non-core, non-strategic industry," Finance Minister P. Chidambaram told a conference on banking and investment. The current

limit is 51 per cent.

Industry leaders welcomed the move, saying it would lure more foreign investors and bring in more foreign capital to help the economy. "It is certainly a good and encouraging step. The list of automatic approvals up to 74 per cent needed to be expanded," V. Raghuraman, secretary general of Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told Reuters.

THE Daily Crossword by C.F. Murray

ACROSS

- 1 Alleviated
- 6 Heming kin
- 10 Make
- 14 Without peer
- 15 Norse god
- 16 Nautical word
- 17 Farrell's Lonigan
- 18 Biblical letter; abbr.
- 19 Tilt
- 20 Rocky crag
- 21 Illusory prospect
- 24 Bright flash
- 26 Howard or Ely
- 27 Layers
- 29 Referring to a topic
- 34 Papal robe
- 35 Part of a snare
- 36 Parshegian
- 37 Valley of vineyards
- 38 Specks
- 39 Problem for Faldo?
- 40 Hole in one
- 41 Crammed
- 42 Smelting mixture
- 43 Made like new
- 45 Talk idly
- 46 Wrath
- 47 Of television
- 48 Antoinette's offering?
- 53 Snooze
- 56 Appearance
- 57 Ampoule
- 58 Fireplace
- 60 — of Cleves
- 61 Sea eagle
- 62 Way
- 63 Nidus
- 64 Remainder
- 65 Of a region

DOWN

- 1 Orient
- 2 Choir voice
- 3 Envious one's reaction?
- 4 Tip
- 5 Notwithstanding
- 6 Driving hazard
- 7 Certain Arizona
- 8 Related
- 9 Cause suffering
- 10 Lead source
- 11 — du Vent
- 12 News source, et times
- 13 Gainsay
- 22 — pinch
- 23 A base
- 25 Tra —
- 27 Detection device
- 28 Use transparent paper
- 29 Lugged around
- 30 Chopped out weeds
- 31 Shrew's weapon?
- 32 Choleric
- 33 Escapade
- 35 Zilch
- 36 Besides
- 39 London gallery
- 41 Deadhead
- 42 Dessert wine
- 44 Designate
- 45 Network listing
- 47 Parking aide
- 48 Scheme
- 49 Heroine of "The Last Days of Pompeii"
- 50 Many, many moons
- 51 Let go
- 52 Lets go
- 54 Can, prov.
- 55 Marmalade
- 59 Neither's partner

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I've never been good with budgets. Which is better, squat or diddy squat?"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TACUE
CINEW
GREEME
LEHTAH

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A _ _ _ _ _ OF A _ _ _ _ _

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: EXUOE USURY TANOEM FATHOM
Answer: Her chances of winning their dispute was this — "REMOTE"

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Capp



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have many private affairs to handle so persevere in a positive fashion. Don't go off on any tangents later tonight.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Friends are busy with own affairs so do not ask favours at all today. Handle your own affairs more intelligently and get good results.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Apply yourself to problematical affairs and solve them well today. Follow through with what bigwigs expect of you in terms of your career.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You had better study that new venture at this time and clear up the obstacles in it before you commit yourself to them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have taken on more responsibility than you can handle today, but do only whatever you can handle without getting into difficulties.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Postpone a discussion with a fellow associate since it would prove endless today, but later this evening brings better results for you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The tasks ahead of you seem endless today, but carry on in the best way you can. Schedule your time and activities wisely.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more willing to do what your mate desires at this time. Help a friend, but keep aside time for yourself which is important.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If a disagreement is brewing at home today, try to stall it off. This is a good day to invite guests into your home to spend time with your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Improve travel matters today so that everything works smoothly. Get communications well handled so that there are no misunderstandings.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is not a good day today or evening to reach a decision about property or money matters, since your judgement is not so good.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have to stop thinking so negatively today and get better results. Others are feeling depressed so concentrate on something pleasant.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire
— Lapis Lazuli

Arab trade fund lends Jordan \$22.6m

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An official Arab fund created five years ago to boost flagging inter-Arab trade has said it would give Jordan a credit of \$22.6 million to finance food imports from some member states.

The 18-month credit by the Arab Trade Fund Programme (ATFP) brought to \$72.2 million the total value of credits extended to Jordan by the ATFP since it was launched in 1991, the Abu Dhabi-based fund said in a statement.

Fund chairman Jassim Al Manai signed the credit agreement with Jordanian central bank

governor, Ziad Fariz, in Rabat.

ATFP is based at the Arab Monetary Fund, which contributed nearly half its paid up capital of \$500 million. The rest came from other regional financial institutions and banks.

ATFP finances only home-made products with the aim of encouraging local production and bolstering inter-Arab trade, which has remained below 10 per cent of the total Arab commercial exchange. It does not finance oil production.

Senior world officials call for sweeping reform of banking business laws

CAMBRIDGE, England (R) — Senior legal officials and regulators attending a conference on economic crime called for sweeping reform of international banking and business laws to strike at

crime and corruption. Delegates targeted banking secrecy laws and the protected status of offshore financial centres which they said have developed into havens for money laundering by organised

crime. A former advisor to British intelligence agencies MI5 and MI6 made a highly unusual and public criticism of the government for supporting offshore centres and bank

secrecy laws. David Bickford said "endemic corruption" was caused by offshore secrecy and "it is difficult to see why it is tolerated by any other than those with an unlawful disposition."

The 14th annual Cambridge International Seminar on economic crime is being attended by over 800 delegates from 90 countries.

U.S. Lawyer George Moscarino of the firm Jones Day Reavis Pogue in Cleveland, agreed that "money laundering profit centres are allowed to exist by mainstream nations".

"The bank secrecy laws (which protect client confidentiality) must be relaxed. There may have been justification for them decades ago, but no longer," he said.

U.K.-based lawyer Arnold Roseo also considers that governments are condoning corrupt trade and business practice. "Trade, business and government are so bound up that corruption has become institutionalised," he said.

"There is a realpolitik aspect to corruption in that it enjoys wide covert government support. No government is powerful enough to ignore commercial pressures and they are unwilling to tackle obvious centres of abuse like offshore havens," he added.

Mr. Roseo also called for a "rethink of corporate law so that each director, shareholder and employee is responsible for what they are doing."

In a discussion session, delegates said public opinion in many Western countries was now more exacting on issues like corruption, corporate governance to business and environmental concerns.

Elected representatives would be under increasing pressure to disclose earnings, and political parties their donations.

Lawyer Moscarino also noted a trend in U.S. courts to punish companies without an "honesty policy" more heavily if they are caught in any wrongdoing. "If you don't have a policy you take a bigger hit. Courts are also looking at how a corporation is run, the company culture."

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CERTIFICATES AMMAN - JORDAN											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 15/09/1996											
PART 12	MONTHLY	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	QTY.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OFFER	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW				TRADING	SHARES	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE		
1	250.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	12.7	1.28	56	3460	648293	24.00	251.00	4.00+
2	1.310	1.310	ARAB BANK	12.0	0.00	1	800	2225	2.00	4.05	0.05+
3	2.700	2.700	ARAB BANK	69.0	0.00	22	26350	27282	1.00	1.00	0.00
4	5.660	4.250	ARAB BANK	5.2	0.08	5	1440	3298	2.22	2.19	0.04-
5	3.040	2.650	ARAB BANK	13.6	0.00	24	10000	54487	2.87	2.85	0.02-
6	1.240	1.240	ARAB BANK	19.6	0.00	4	126	721	2.87	2.75	0.12-
7	4.180	2.300	ARAB BANK	15.6	0.07	48	36779	28622	0.92	0.99	0.04-
8	3.950	2.000	ARAB BANK	18.4	0.00	2	400	1280	1.32	1.32	0.00
9	3.430	3.230	ARAB BANK	1.4	0.73	4	10000	2800	2.23	2.23	0.00
10	1.090	1.090	ARAB BANK	0.0	0.00	1	10000	2800	1.24	1.24	0.00
11	1.640	1.000	ARAB BANK	0.0	0.00	22	11165	2814	1.24	1.24	0.00
BANK BROWTH TOTALS											
1	4.500	4.000	JORDANIAN BANK	12.4	4.40	1	35	225	4.50	4.65	0.05+
2	2.920	2.150	JORDANIAN BANK	5.2	9.11	4	3000	4570	2.15	2.38	0.23+
3	2.660	1.900	JORDANIAN BANK	5.2	0.00	2	125	249	2.15	2.38	0.23+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
1	2.900	1.450	JORDANIAN BANK	11.4	7.27	59	78060	128828	1.64	1.55	0.01-
2	2.800	1.140	JORDANIAN BANK	8.8	6.07	1	60	78	1.62	1.60	0.02-
3	2.800	1.140	JORDANIAN BANK	10.0	8.00	1	2160	9096	1.39	1.34	0.05-
4	2.220	1.040	JORDANIAN BANK	0.0	0.00	49	50750	64732	1.24	1.29	0.05+
5	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	10	19130	11502	1.58	1.62	0.04+
6	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	3	1200	9600	1.58	1.62	0.04+
7	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	14	14000	19000	1.58	1.62	0.04+
8	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	42	23280	11672	1.16	1.22	0.06+
9	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	21	7250	12864	1.85	1.89	0.04+
10	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	21	7250	12864	1.85	1.89	0.04+
11	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	21	7250	12864	1.85	1.89	0.04+
12	1.360	1.360	JORDANIAN BANK	19.0	0.00	21	7250	12864	1.85	1.89	0.04+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
1	2.720	3.000	JORDANIAN BANK	34.9	3.02	21	1171	2764	3.22	3.21	0.01-
2	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
3	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
4	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
5	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
6	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
7	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
8	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
9	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
10	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
11	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
12	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
1	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
2	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
3	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
4	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
5	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
6	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
7	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
8	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
9	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
10	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
11	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
12	2.550	2.710	JORDANIAN BANK	34.8	0.00	19	7450	23803	3.12	3.21	0.09+
GRAND TOTAL											
1	132.11	132.11	JORDANIAN BANK	1.50	903	60494	198969				

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Finance

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Prices as at 15/09/96 19:06

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NTL	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.5150	0.6443	1.2425	110.50	1.3694	1531.47	1.6992	5.1555
DE Mark	0.8801	-	0.4241	0.8212	73.01	0.9036	1010.54	1.2118	3.4025
GB Sterling	1.5520	1.5520	-	1.9300	171.80	2.1253	2378.84	2.8372	6.0013
CH Franc	0.6048	1.2154	0.5156	-	88.89	1.0986	1226.82	136.56	4.1360
JP Yen	0.0080	1.3673	0.5800	1.1214	-	1.2359	13.62	153.36	4.6530
CA Dollar	0.7302	1.1035	0.4688	0.9052	1.24	-	1115.32	1.2388	3.7661
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9868	0.4194	0.8811	1386.39	0.8636	-	11.09	3.3642
NTL Guilder	0.5885	0.9712	0.3781	0.7321	165.06	0.2056	800.92	-	3.0328
FR Franc	0.1840	0.2938	0.1246	0.2495	21.44	0.2656	32.95	32.9500	-

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	23.65	24.05
WTI	24.45	24.90
Bony	23.85	24.05
Dubai	21.57	21.31
UL Gas	218.00	218.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4041	0.17161	0.3327	29.5447
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.41264	0.17544	0.33941	30.1698
KW Dinar	3.3333	5.05051	2.14777	4.15455	386.276
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.01929	1.70611	3.36688	293.858
CY Pound	2.1353	3.235	1.3723	2.6531	235.951

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	362.25	362.75
Silver (oz)	5.03	5.05
Platinum (oz)	388.2	389.2
AI (3 Months)	1436	1440
CU (3 Months)	1688	1673
Zinc (3 Months)	1021	1024
Lead (3 Months)	808	809
NI (3 Months)	7550	7580

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-12-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.34	5.50	5.75	5.93	6.06
GBP	5.45	5.56	5.62	5.73	5.88
JPY	0.43	0.34	0.50	0.55	0.60
DEM	2.84	2.84	2.87	2.83	3.12
FRF	3.49	3.58	3.67	3.72	3.79
CHF	1.58	1.68	1.67	2.08	2.00
ITL	8.25	8.25	8.15	8.12	8.08

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/bis)	111.75	Spot
Cocoa (c/bis)	1419	Spot
Sugar (S/bis)	350.8	Spot
Wheat (S/bis)	3.95	Spot
Soya (c/bis)	24.45	Spot
Tea (t/bis)	120	Spot
Barley (S/bis)	3.13	Spot
Rice (S/bis)	445	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1053	1.1058
DE Mark	0.467	0.4693
CH Franc	0.5587	0.5715
FR Franc	0.1372	0.1378
JP Yen	0.8402	0.8424
NTL Guilder	0.4187	0.4188
IT Lira	0.4523	0.4546

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

United go top of table

LONDON (AFP) — Manchester United and Newcastle claimed home victories against Nottingham Forest and Blackburn to give the top of the premiership a familiar look.

Talismanic Frenchman Eric Cantona netted two late goals, the second from the penalty spot, to take his season's tally to four and seal the 4-1 home win which put unbeaten Manchester United top of the table.

But with second-placed Sheffield Wednesday playing Ruud Gullit's high-flying Chelsea on Sunday, United's return to the top may be short-lived.

Forest, the last team to win a premiership game at Old Trafford, had taken a fourth-minute lead through Norwegian Alf-Inge Haaland before his compatriot Ole Gunnar Solskjaer netted his second of the season.

Welsh winger Ryan Giggs headed the champions in front with his first of the term two minutes before the break before captain Cantona completed the rout.

Shell-shocked forest manager Frank Clark believes last season's double winners Manchester United are looking better than ever.

Clark said: "I think they are a better side than they were last season and that doesn't give the rest of us much hope."

United manager Alex Ferguson was delighted at the way his team had bounced back after the 1-0 defeat by Juventus in mid-week.

Newcastle by contrast were made to struggle for a 2-1 win against a Blackburn side who tried without success to prove there is life after Alan Shearer, who left for Newcastle for a record 15 million pounds in the summer.

Despite a below-par performance Newcastle manager Keegan was relieved to see his side land their third league win on the trot which consigned Shearer's old club — the 1994 champions — to the foot of the table.

A penalty from Shearer and Les Ferdinand's fifth of the season were enough — just — to lift Newcastle up to third but Keegan admitted:

"We weren't anything like our best and yet we've got a result."

We've been renowned for



Newcastle United's Peter Beardsley (right) is held off a high bouncing ball by Blackburn Rovers' Colin Hendry during their Premiership match at St James' Park in Newcastle. Newcastle won the match 2-1 (Reuters photo)

playing well and losing but this season we're winning games by banging in there."

Former Arsenal boss George Graham said it was great to be back on the touchline after an 18 month absence — even though his new club Leeds handed Coventry their first win of the season.

Andy Couzens gave Graham a flying start as Leeds manager by netting after only 51 seconds but John Salako levelled after 57 minutes and Noel Whelan, sold by Graham's predecessor Howard Wilkinson, hit the winner eight minutes later.

"It was terrific to be back. It felt like I had never been away," said Graham who was banned for a year for receiving illegal payments from transfers.

Everton manager Joe Royle refused to panic after seeing his side — many pundits' pre-season dark horse tip for the title — crash to their third successive defeat against middles-brough.

"I didn't say we were a championship side after three games so after three

defeats we aren't a relegation side either," he said after the 2-1 home defeat.

Nick Barmby (61 minutes) and Brazilian star Juninho (81) brought Boro their 2-1 comeback victory at Everton, who slumped 4-0 to Wimbledon last week.

Craig Short had put the Merseysiders in front eight minutes into the match.

Tottenham boss Gerry Francis denied that Newcastle's unsettled defender Warren Barton is his 3.5 million pound target after seeing his side scrape a lucky 1-0 win at Southampton courtesy of a Chris Armstrong penalty.

"We haven't been in contact with Warren Barton or Newcastle, but I am optimistic that this week we might be able to add to our squad which would be nice," he said.

A spot-kick also proved decisive at the baseball ground, where Derby scraped a 1-0 win over 10-man Sunderland in the battle of the two sides who won automatic promotion last term.

Rangers exploit farce as Hearts have 4 sent off

GLASGOW (AFP) — Rangers maintained their perfect start in their premier league with a 3-0 victory after an extraordinary game at Ibrox on Saturday in which Hearts had four men ordered off.

Red cards for Frenchman Pasquale Bruno (2nd bookable offence), David Weir (violent conduct), Neil Poynton (2nd bookable offence) and Paul Ritchie (abusive language) equalled the previous Scottish record for dismissals in a senior game.

That was set in another Rangers game, against Celtic in the Scottish cup quarterfinal at Parkhead on March 17 1991.

The game also equalled the British league record for men sent off from one side, as a farcical eight-minute spell saw three men take early baths as the temperature approached boiling point at Ibrox.

When the second half started with Rangers leading by Gordon Durie's 39th minute goal nobody could have predicted that 23 minutes later they would have been two up against a side with only seven players.

Durie's goal came as a result of some quick thinking from Dane Brian Laudrup, who rolled a quickly taken corner to Stuart McCall and with the Hearts defence still retreating, the midfielder slipped the ball to Durie who thumped it home from six yards.

Paul Gascoigne scored Rangers' second with a superb individual effort shrugging off a challenge by Weir before cantering round French goalkeeper Gilles Rousset to blast the ball home from a tight angle.

After Ritchie's dismissal — the fourth — the game became farcical, with Rangers players apparently unwilling to exploit their numerical advantage although sub Ally McCoist netted with 10 minutes to go.

Rangers, who crashed 3-0 in the champions league to Grasshoppers of Zurich on Wednesday, have now won all five of their opening league games.

Old firm rivals Celtic meanwhile kept up the pressure and stayed second with a hard-earned victory at Dundee United.

Malky MacKay's last-gasp goal completed a 2-1 win for the visitors after Gary McSwegan 87th minute equaliser had cancelled out an opening goal from Pierre Van Hooydonk.

Celtic, who had defender Brian O'Neil red-carded (for a second bookable offence), have stretched their premier unbeaten run to 36 matches.

"I am delighted to get the victory and to be fair the red card changed the game."

Aberdeen stayed in third with a convincing 3-0 win over Kilmarnock with Billy Dodds grabbing two goals and Frenchman Toni Koumbouare grabbing the opener on his debut.

Former England star Wilkins, who quit as player-manager of QPR more than a week ago, got off to a winning start in Scotland as Hibs beat pointless Raith 1-0.

"The game's changed since I last played up here. Both teams today tried to keep the ball on the deck and play football," said 40-year-old former Rangers star.

In the day's other Premier Division match newly-promoted Dunfermline were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Motherwell.

Papin heads Bordeaux into league lead

PARIS (AFP) — Former French international striker Jean-Pierre Papin scored in Bordeaux's 3-0 win over Lille to take his side to the top of the French football championship.

Bordeaux, unbeaten this season, have 15 points, a point ahead of Paris Saint Germain who can regain the lead if they beat Cannes.

Other title challengers failed to make up a lot of ground with Lens slumping to defeat and Monaco and Auxerre featuring in scoreless draws while Nantes and Nancy's dreadful seasons continued.

Papin, signed from Bayern Munich in the summer, scored his fourth of the season for the 1996 UEFA Cup finalists with a fine second-half header.

Didier Tholot, one of the few survivors from the team that lost to Bayern Munich in the UEFA Cup final, added a brace including a splendid 25 yard lob in the last minute.

Bordeaux have lost a coach and several of the stars that played so well for them last season, French internationals Zinedine Zidane, Christophe Dugarry and Bixente Lizarazu have gone abroad and Dutch international Richard Witschge signed for Dutch champions Ajax.

Monaco could only draw 0-0 at home to Lille, although the Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson had a goal disallowed and Scottish midfielder John Collins had a shot hit the post.

Lens, second at the start of play, failed to win for the fourth successive game losing 1-0 away at Guingamp. Liberian international Christophe Wreh, signed from Monaco in the summer, scored the decisive goal.

Marseille, the 1993 European Cup winners, scored a narrow 1-0 win over struggling Nice, which provoked the marseille fans into booing them off the pitch.

Nice midfielder Frederic Gioria headed Marseille captain Jacky Durand's cross into his own net.

Both of Marseille's former England based players Chris Makin and Tony Cascarino were substituted, though Cascarino, Marseille's leading scorer in the past two seasons, had a first-half effort cleared off the line.

The 1995 champions Nantes will be sympathising with Blackburn Rovers, the English champions from the same season, as they crashed 1-0 at home to Metz, their fifth defeat of

Delighted Gosden wins 1st English Classic

DONCASTER (AFP) — A delighted John Gosden captured his first English Classic here Saturday when he trained 8/1 shot Shantou to win a thrilling 225,000 pounds (\$340,000) English St. Leger.

Shantou, whose rider Frankie Dettori was celebrating his second successive St. Leger triumph, edged ahead of 2/1 favourite Dushyantor, under champion jockey Pat Eddery, in the last 25 yards to win by a neck in the mile and six furlongs race (2800 metres) — Europe's oldest classic.

The 28/1 outsider Samraan, owned by Khalid Al-Mudhaf and trained by John Dunlop, came home a four lengths third under John Carroll.

"You can take a lot of slanted statistics to say anything. But everyone's human and of course the criticism hurt. But if you beat on the door long enough, one day you will knock it down," Gosden said replying to the critics who had queried his ability

after waiting so long for a classic winner.

Shantou's triumph not only presented former California-based Gosden with a welcome first classic winner but also Dubai Defence Minister Sheikh Mohammed with his second St. Leger in three years.

Sheikh Mohammed will have gained extra pleasure out of the win as Dushyantor, second in the English Derby with Shantou third, is trained by Henry Cecil who he withdrew his horses from last season after they had a well publicised row.

Cecil was not too upset after the race saying: "He did everything right and had the race won a furlong out but he just died in the final 50 yards."

"If he comes out of the race alright he may well run in the Arc de Triomphe in October," Cecil added.

Mons. ridden by Spanish apprentice Oscar Urbino, led the 11-strong field into the straight with Samraan in second. Eddery then produced Dushyantor, owned

by Saudi Arabian Prince Khaled Abdullah, with a run that took him into the lead with over a furlong to go.

The gallant Dushyantor, though, was unable to repel the late surging run by Shantou that thrilled the huge crowd.

The result provided a sharp response to those who considered this year's derby one of the poorest in its history and continued the resurgence of the St. Leger, which only a year ago was without a sponsor and seemingly destined for the equivalent of racing's backwater.

Shantou's victory could also provide leading English bookmaker Ladbrokes with headaches over the next few weeks.

A Ladbrokes' customer stands to win over 133,000 pounds, after betting 300 pounds each way double on Shantou at 9-1 for the St. Leger and Billy Bushwacker at 40-1 for October's Cambridgeshire handicap.

Timarida gives Ireland first champion in a decade

DUBLIN (AFP) — The Aga Khan owned Timarida won the 90,000 pound (\$135,000) Irish Champion Stakes at Leopardstown racecourse here Saturday giving Ireland their first success in the race in 10 years.

Timarida, trained by John Oxx and ridden by Jonny Murtagh, beat compatriot Dance Design by a length and a half with English challenger Glory of Dancer third, ridden by Frenchman Olivier Peslier, a neck away.

Shaamit, the English Derby winner and 5/4 favourite, could only finish fourth.

Murtagh brought Timarida with a well timed run down the outside to beat longtime pacesetter Dance Design, ridden by Michael Kinane.

The Michael hills ridden Shaamit found himself bemired in against the far rail and was never able to pose a serious threat.

His trainer William Haggas took defeat on the chin and was unwilling to blame hills.

"It's very disappointing but I've only seen

the race once and I'm not going to criticise the jockey," he said. "Things went our way in the derby and maybe they didn't this time."

"This won't be the last you'll be seeing of him. This is just a temporary setback."

Possible targets for Shaamit now are the champion stakes and the Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe.

"I'll have to go away and think about but I would say I'd be inclined to give him one more race this season," added Haggas.

Timarida, the first Irish winner of the race since Park Express, was taking her win and place earnings to more than 600,000 pounds.

She will be retired at the end of the season but may first tackle the Champion Stakes.

There is also a slight possibility that she may be supplemented for the Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe.



Patrick Collette of Bordeaux is tackled by an unidentified player of Lille in their French soccer league match Bordeaux vs Lille. Bordeaux took the lead of the championship (Reuters photo)

the season. Nantes, who lost French internationals Nicholas Ouedec and Reynald Pedros from bottom with two points — one point better than Blackburn in the English Premiership.

Launching its new musical season

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation in cooperation with Goethe Institut presents the German

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CONCORD "2"
Jim Carrey ...in Dumb and Dumber
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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McGwire hits 50-homer mark as A's lose

CLEVELAND (R) — Oakland Athletics slugger Mark McGwire reached one lofty milestone on Saturday, and 40-year-old wonder Paul Molitor approached another in losing causes in American League baseball action.

McGwire powered home runs in each game of a doubleheader loss to the Cleveland Indians to reach the 50-homer mark, and Molitor had two hits in a losing effort against Seattle that left him just two shy of the coveted 3,000-hit mark.

Cleveland posted a pair of 9s to register a doubleheader sweep of the Athletics, despite the booming bat of Oakland slugger Mark McGwire.

McGwire, who began the season on the disabled list and has missed 29 games because of injuries, became just the 13th player in history to hit 50 home runs in a season.

"Considering how I started the season, to think what I have done so far is very self-gratifying," said McGwire, who slugged 49 homers as a Rookie in 1987.

"I couldn't expect for anything like this to happen and I wasn't supposed to be ready until the all-star break (in July). And to even have an opportunity to hit 50 homers is something special."

In the opener, Kevin Seitzer capped a four-run fourth inning with a bases-clearing double and Charles Nagy (16-4) won his fourth straight start in a 9-2 romp.

In the second game, Albert Belle's three-run homer capped a five-run fourth inning and the Indians held on for 9-8 win.

At Minnesota, Rich Amaral scored on a throwing error by shortstop Jeff Rebollet and Alex Rodriguez added a sacrifice fly in the top of the 10th to lead the Seattle Mariners to their third straight victory, 5-3 over the Minnesota Twins.

Molitor, Minnesota's designated hitter, went 2-for-4, leaving him just two hits



Houston Astros' third baseman Sean Berry lunges for the ball as Colorado Rockies' runner Kevin Ritz slides into third base on teammate Quinton McCracken's bunt in the third inning in Denver. Ritz scored as the ball rolled into left field (Reuters photo)

shy of 3,000. The remarkable Molitor leads the league with 209 hits this year.

Molitor, a St. Paul native, may have his last chance to reach the 3,000-hit mark in front of his hometown fans Sunday when the Twins host the Mariners. The Twins begin a 10-game road trip Monday in Kansas City.

In Boston, Don Slaught's three-run double highlighted a five-run first inning and Danny Tartabull belted a grand slam as the Chicago

White Sox pounded the fading Red Sox 13-5.

Chicago used three hits, three walks and an error to score five runs in the first off Boston starter Tom Gordon (10-9).

The White Sox remained 1 1/2 games behind the Baltimore Orioles in the wild card chase.

In Toronto, Paul O'Neill doubled home the tying run in the top of the eighth and Cecil Fielder followed with an RBI single as the New York Yankees rallied against Pat Hentgen for

their fifth straight win, 3-1 over the Toronto Blue Jays.

In Detroit, the Baltimore Orioles rallied from a 6-1 deficit to beat the Detroit Tigers 7-6 and remain 3 1/2 games behind the Yankees in the American League East.

Trailing 6-3 in the top of the seventh inning, the Orioles scored four runs to vault ahead. Roberto Alomar gave Baltimore the lead for good with an RBI single.

At Texas, Dave Nilsson hit a two-run homer and Jeff Cirillo added a three-run blast to power the Milwaukee Brewers to an 8-6 victory over the Western Division leading Texas Rangers, who suffered their fourth straight loss.

In Kansas City, Mike Macfarlane homered and drove in three runs and Kevin Appier scattered nine hits over eight innings as the Kansas City Royals beat the California Angels, 3-5 for their fourth win in five games.

Appier improved his record to 13-10.

American League	
Seattle	5
Chicago	13
1st-Cleveland	9
2nd-Cleveland	9
Kansas City	8
New York	3
Baltimore	7
Milwaukee	8
Minnesota	3
Boston	5
Oakland	2
Oakland	8
California	5
Toronto	1
Detroit	6
Texas	6

National League	
New York	6
Philadelphia	6
Colorado	7
San Diego	3
Pittsburgh	7
Montreal	3
Los Angeles	9
Atlanta	5
Chicago	2
Houston	3
Cincinnati	2
San Francisco	5
Florida	2
St. Louis	5

Top 3 German teams all draw

BONN (AFP) — The top three in the German Football Championship of Bayern Munich, VfB Stuttgart and Borussia Dortmund all drew on Saturday leaving the positions unchanged.

Leaders Bayern Munich, beaten 3-0 by Valencia in the UEFA Cup on Tuesday, had to rely on a 70th minute equaliser from Thomas Strunz away at Schalke 04. Schalke striker Martin Max had given the home side a 36th minute lead.

The battle between Stuttgart, in second, and champions Borussia Dortmund, in third, also ended in a 1-1 draw.

Elsewhere there were high-scoring affairs with Munich 1860 thrashing struggling Freiburg 4-0, Bulgarian international midfielder Daniel Boromirov scoring twice.

FC Cologne, lying in fifth on 12 points, won 4-0 against Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Nigerian midfielder Sunday Oliseb, formerly the first Nigerian to play Serie A football, and Austrian veteran Toni Polster, scored the other two Cologne goals.

The individual scoring honours went to Werder Bremen's 30-year-old striker Bruno Labbadia. He scored a hat-trick in Werder's 5-1 home win over VfL Bochum on Friday.

World track stars gather for season finale

TOKYO (AFP) — Carl Lewis will be among 15 Olympic champions taking part in a star-studded finale to the athletics season here Monday.

The 35-year-old American will be taking part in his last 100m race in Japan, and it will be on the national stadium track where he broke the world record at the 1991 world championships with a run of 9.86sec.

Lewis finished his Olympic career by taking a fourth straight long jump gold medal, and ninth Olympic title overall in Atlanta.

Another win here, however, is unlikely. Lewis will have to beat current Olympic champion Donovan Bailey of Canada, silver medalist Frankie Fredericks of Namibia and fellow American Dennis Mitchell.

Bailey set the current world record of 9.84sec in the Olympic final, bearing pre-race favourite Fredericks into second.

Mitchell, fourth in Atlanta, defeated world champion Bailey and Lewis to win the Brussels Grand Prix after the Olympics.

and beat Bailey in Berlin and Milan.

In the women's 100m, Gail Devers of the United States and Jamaica's Merlene Ottey, who had a photo-finish in Atlanta, will clash again in Tokyo.

Double Olympic champion Marie-Jose Pécé of France is favoured in the 200m against Ottey and American Inger Miller.

Five of the Olympic champions on display are world record holders and triple jump world record holder Jonathan Edwards will also compete.

Edwards will be seeking to avenge his defeat in Atlanta by American Kenny Harrison.

Other prominent athletes include Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria (high jump), Svetlana Masterkova of Russia (800m), Inessa Kravets of Ukraine (long jump), Heike Drechsler of Germany (long jump) and Czech Javelin thrower Jan Zelezny.



Spain's Miguel Indurain (left) cycles along with Switzerland's Toni Rominger and fellow Spaniard Fernando Escartin (right) during the 8th stage of the Tour of Spain cycling race. Italian Nicola Minali won the stage and his compatriot Fabio Baldato retained the leader's yellow jersey (Reuters photo)

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Lebanon: Israel is planning attack

CAIRO (AFP) — Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez on Sunday accused Israel of considering a new attack against his country, after talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"I informed President Mubarak about the daily Israeli threats which are made directly or indirectly against Lebanon," Mr. Bouez told AFP without elaborating.

"These threats tend to make us believe that Israel will try to carry out an aggression against Lebanon in an bid to get out of the stalemate of the peace process," Mr. Bouez said.

Asked if he had asked for Mr. Mubarak's intervention to prevent any Israeli attack on Lebanon, Mr. Bouez said: "President Mubarak is in contact with Israel and the United States and understands perfectly the situation on the ground."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last month warned Lebanon that its people would pay the price of any new military confrontation with Israel.

Also in August, an Israeli army report predicted the Iranian-backed Hizbollah would step up suicide attacks in the buffer zone, occupied by the Jewish state since 1985, to coincide with the Lebanese elections.

Hizbollah rocket attacks into northern Galilee sparked Israel's 17-day blitz of Lebanon that killed 175 people before it was halted by a U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement.

Lebanon and Syria have meanwhile rejected proposals from Mr. Netanyahu for a "Lebanon-first" option to break the deadlock in peace talks between Israel and Damascus.

Israel has also expressed concern with Syrian troop movements in Lebanon, where Damascus deploys 35,000 troops.

Mr. Netanyahu said Friday: "We are following the Syrian troop movements very closely and of course we are not taking such things lightly."

The Syrian army started to cut back its deployment in Beirut at the end of August, as part of a redeployment of troops around the country.

Police keep tight lid on cause of children's death

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Investigators on Sunday kept a tight lid on the cause of the death of two children in the Shmeisani area on Wednesday, as police officials said that the criminal lab examining blood samples of the children had not yet completed its examinations.

But a source at the National Institute of Forensic Medicine told the Jordan Times that his office sent samples Thursday to the criminal lab at the Public Security Department (PSD) and that he "thought" that the lab was withholding results.

"We sent samples to the criminal lab on Saturday of some poisonous materials which we could not analyse, and the criminal lab was supposed to send

back the completed inquiry Sunday to finish our report. But they have not yet done so," the forensic pathologist said.

He said the coroner believe that the cause of the death was asphyxia and that he suspected the cause to be chemical.

"As far as I know, the final results indicating the kind of poison found in the children's body are not yet apparent," the police official told the Jordan Times, adding that police will reveal the results when they are finalised.

Hanin Mazen Masri, nine, and her six-year-old brother Hani, were found dead by their mother in their apartment in Abu Oneizah Housing in Shmeisani.

The two children were left alone by the parents, after their mother drove her

(Continued on page 7)

Afghan air raid said to kill 12 in rebel city

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghan government jets bombed the rebel Taleban-held eastern city of Jalalabad on Sunday, killing at least 12 people and wounding 50, a Pakistan-based Afghan news service said.

The three bombing raids also sent civilians fleeing in panic, witnesses in the area said.

Afghan military sources in the strategic government-held town of Sarobi said government forces had laid mines on the eastern highway from Jalalabad to the capital Kabul to block any Taleban advance.

A government spokesman in Kabul also said an official delegation led by Interior Minister Mohammad Younus Qanuni had left for Uzbekistan for talks there with opposition northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum to persuade him to join forces with the govern-

ment. A Taleban militia spokesman in the Pakistani border city of Peshawar said earlier that five people had been killed in the air raids on Jalalabad.

But Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), quoting its sources in Jalalabad, later put the death toll at 12 and said 50 injured people were to hospital.

U.N. sources said the planes attacked the airport, the governor's palace and the nearby Spinghar Hotel from about 7.45 a.m. (0315 GMT). They also dropped anti-personnel mines near the Bebsud Bridge, about two kilometres west of the city.

Daniel Bellamy, chief of mission for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, said at least 25 civilian casualties had been admitted at one hospital in the city, captured in a swift advance by the Taleban militia on Wednesday.

Gulf press calls on U.S. to halt build-up to avert Iraq disaster

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) newspapers on Sunday warned a fresh U.S. military strike could cause a disaster in Iraq, with one paper saying it hoped Washington would back off and another blaming Saddam Hussein for the increased tension.

But a high-level Saudi diplomat, who said he is in close contact with Washington, said the United States planned to strike Iraq again if it did not pull its missiles and air defences out of southern Iraq.

The diplomat's comment came after U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry left Saudi Arabia for talks in Kuwait and Bahrain, before returning to the Saudi kingdom.

The United States hit Iraq with cruise missiles Sept. 3 and 4 in retaliation for an Iraqi military intervention into the northern Kurdish areas in alliance with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The KDP has since taken control of northern Iraq, ousting its rival, the Patriotic Union Of Kurdistan (PUK).

The English-language Khaleej Times voiced pessimism that Mr. Perry's tour would bring peace, saying President Bill Clinton would be tempted by the massive build-up to hit Iraq.

"The more troops and military equipment the U.S. sends to the area — a second aircraft carrier is coming to the region — the

more difficult it will be for the Clinton administration to desist from striking Iraq," the daily commented.

"Since the Gulf operation is in large part U.S. election-driven, President Clinton cannot give the impression of backing off without giving President Saddam Hussein a bloodier nose than through the two rounds of cruise missile attacks," it added.

The senior Saudi diplomat said the United States is threatening to attack Iraq unless it removes its air defence missiles and radar from the southern "no-fly" zone and that several countries, including Russia, have tried to convince Baghdad to comply with the demand.

The United States is telling its allies in the Gulf that Baghdad's decision on Friday to suspend fire at allied airplanes patrolling the exclusion zones for Iraqi aircraft was "not enough," the diplomat said.

The English-language Gulf News said it was optimistic the Perry tour could defuse the crisis, though it expected tough talks.

"The U.S. appears to be shifting to a more consultative approach, which will hopefully end in calling off its plans to carry out any more attacks," that daily said.

"Perry will have a tough job explaining to the Gulf leaders what America's motives are in its unilateral action, which has escalated the tension in the Gulf and

sent tremors around the world."

The outspoken newspaper Al Khaleej said in a front-page editorial, "we say again: Damn Saddam and his regime."

"There is no glimpse of hope in the Arab horizon and the Arab countries will not be able, for several reasons, to oppose the U.S. plans."

"Again, we cannot but warn against the plots of some circles against Iraq, which is on the verge of a real disaster if the United States carried out another aggression that could destroy Iraq's remaining ability for cohesion."

The paper blamed President Saddam for the crisis, saying his offensive against the PUK on behalf of the KDP provided an excuse for Washington.

It asked whether the Iraqi regime had been caught in the U.S. rap. "It has likely been caught, and it has become easy for the U.S. policy planners to expect his behaviour, reactions and how to provoke him and drag him."

The United States said Mr. Perry was in the region to consult with its allies on responding to Baghdad's threats to shoot at Western aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq.

Washington pressed ahead with sending a second aircraft carrier to the region despite Iraq's decision to call off its threats.

CIA spent \$100m in anti-Saddam campaign

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Washington spent some \$100 million on a covert campaign to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, but little came of it, according to a report Sunday.

The Washington Post reported that dissident Kurds and other Iraqis went to a small compound of houses in the northern city of Salahuddin to get millions of dollars in Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funds.

The money went on light arms, ammunition, communications equipment, printing and broadcasting equipment and vehicles among other items, the paper said.

After spending roughly \$20 million a year since the programme began with a secret order given by President George Bush in 1991, the spy agency has little to show for the effort, the paper said, quoting unnamed administration, congressional and Iraqi disident sources.

The predisposition of everybody in policy on Capitol Hill is to throw money at these things," without understanding how difficult they are, the paper quoted one government official as saying.

Iraqi military action against the northern area two weeks ago shredded the effort, the paper said, adding that many members of a CIA supported umbrella organisation in the Kurdish region had been killed, captured or surrounded by forces loyal to President Saddam.

Palestinians protest Israeli 'mistreatment'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians protested against Israeli officials for "mistreating" and setting up "barriers" to travel by Palestinian deputies and foreign diplomats, an official said Sunday.

Palestinian Civil Affairs Minister Jamil Al Tarifi told journalists he made the complaint in a letter sent Friday to Oren Shabor, his Israeli counterpart on the liaison committee.

Mr. Tarifi said he protested the "mistreatment by Israeli authorities against Palestinian deputies as they travel by car from the West Bank to Gaza," crossing Israel.

He also complained of "obstacles which Israel has posed to foreign and Arab diplomats and to transport of their baggage" between the Palestinian self-rule areas. "Israel purposefully delays the granting of passage for foreign diplomats," Mr. Tarifi said.

He also criticised Israeli border officials at Rafah between Gaza and Egypt, saying "Israel lately tends more and more not to allow Palestinians to pass into Egypt."

"All this mistreatment constitutes a flagrant violation of the intermediate autonomy accords," he added.

A Palestinian official said on Sunday Israel had banned Palestinians from

using a new bypass road built in the West Bank.

Mustafa Al Natshe, mayor of the West Bank city of Hebron, said Israeli soldiers prevented him and other Palestinians from using a new road that links Jerusalem to Jewish settlements located between the Palestinian cities of Bethlehem and Hebron.

Mr. Natshe told Reuters he was turned back last week when he tried driving on the bypass road to Jerusalem. He said soldiers told him "only Jews use this road."

Israel confiscated vast tracts of Palestinian land to construct the bypass road that circumvents Hebron and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-ruled Bethlehem.

"It is oppression and injustice when Israel confiscates Palestinian land and builds on it settlements and bypass roads for Jews," he said.

"This is a very serious matter at a time when we should be having peace with Israel because it never happened in the history of occupation."

An Israeli army spokeswoman said in response that "the Palestinian population has available to it acceptable (alternative) roads with passage points, through which Palestinians with permits to enter Israel may pass."

Low turnout in Bekaa Valley voting; Hizbollah may suffer

HAZLE (Agencies) — Polls closed Sunday in the fifth and final round of month-long parliamentary elections in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley after only about 21 per cent of the registered voters bothered to turn out.

The Interior Ministry said that only 21 per cent of the more than 400,000 voters in the area had gone to the polls one and a half hours before the voting ended at 5 p.m. (1400 GMT).

The low turnout appeared to threaten the pro-Iranian Hizbollah with a new setback in Lebanon's parliamentary election.

The Bekaa was electing the last 23 members to the 128-member parliament after voting in Mount Lebanon, the north, Beirut and the south on the past four Sundays.

The Lebanese Association for the Democracy of Elections (LADE), an independent watchdog, reported thousands of irregularities in the poll. It reported widespread abuses in the earlier rounds.

A pro-government list including six ministers, several parliamentary deputies and candidates of Hizbollah

and the secular Amal, Lebanon's two main rival Shiite Muslim movements, was expected to win most of the seats.

It was challenged by a 10-man leftist ticket headed by Communist Party leader Farouk Dharouge and a six-man list of independents.

The low turnout appeared to threaten the chances of a Maronite Christian and a Sunni Muslim candidate that Hizbollah

was backing on the list, observers said.

Hizbollah lost two of its eight parliamentary seats in earlier rounds and losses by two supporters in the Bekaa would be another damaging political blow.

Hizbollah's Sunni supporter could lose because he was facing popular Sunni rivals on other lists, local observers said.

Christians, who total over 25 per cent of Bekaa voters, were either refusing to vote or were crossing Hizbollah and its supporters off their ballot papers.

Reporters at polling stations saw many people holding ballot papers with Hizbollah candidates crossed off.

Netanyahu assails Egypt over peace process, says Arafat helped develop 'world terrorism'

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, turning aside Arab charges of Israeli foot-dragging on Middle East peace, chided Egypt on Sunday for trying a planned regional economic summit to further moves by the Jewish state.

Mr. Netanyahu also blamed Palestinian leader for what he described as world terrorism.

"Egypt, a key mediator in five years of Arab-Israeli talks, has said there must be tangible progress towards peace if it is to go ahead with organising the conference set for Cairo in November. The meeting is meant to integrate Israel into the regional economy."

"To threaten us, as pressure on us, to cancel the Cairo conference, is like a man who cuts off his nose to spite his face. We are not seriously listening to these things," Mr. Netanyahu told Israeli radio in an interview marking the Jewish new year.

Mr. Netanyahu said he doubted Egypt would suspend the conference, saying the meeting was in Cairo's own interest.

"I do not advise anyone to use tools like this against us. It will also be of no help."

In Cairo, diplomats said

three months of inaction by Mr. Netanyahu's government have prompted his Arab neighbours to consider a more robust approach towards peace negotiations, including such steps as a boycott on multilateral talks with the Jewish state.

Syria and its ally Lebanon have been boycotting the multilateral talks on regional cooperation for years but countries like Egypt and Jordan have argued in the past that such talks help to convince Israel of their good intentions. Following his upset May election victory over Shimon Peres, Mr. Netanyahu alarmed the Arab World by rejecting the principle of trading occupied Arab land-for-peace, the foundation of previously-held U.S.-sponsored talks.

Egypt in 1979 became the first Arab country to sign a formal peace treaty with Israel. Then Prime Minister Menachem Begin, a founder of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud, departed from the party's headline ideology to approve the pact, which led to a full pullout from all Egyptian land taken by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

Israeli media have said Mr. Netanyahu's defence establishment has debated the significance of large-scale Egyptian army exercises held in recent days.

"We must stand determined here, follow with caution any movement of forces," Mr. Netanyahu said, referring to the Egyptian exercises and to recent reports of Syrian troop movements.

"We are certainly not sitting back carefree regarding certain possibilities, but we are also making it clear to the other side that our direction is that of peace — meaning that there must be mutual compromise and not one-sided surrender by Israel to the demands of the Arabs, which is what we had with the previous (Peres) government," Mr. Netanyahu said.

The Israeli prime minister also held Mr. Arafat responsible for the development of world terrorism.

"Arafat contributed greatly to the development of international terrorism. He created new tactics, such as hijacking planes and blowing them up in midair," Mr. Netanyahu said in an interview with Israeli Radio.

Mr. Netanyahu admitted that since signing the 1993 Oslo accords with Israel, the "PLO itself has moved away from terrorism."

But Mr. Arafat "has not made the necessary efforts to put an end to organised terrorism by Palestinian fundamentalists," he said.

The Israeli prime minister underlined his desire to con-

tinue the Middle East peace process but called negotiations with the Palestinians "the most difficult task."

"We will begin negotiations on the readjustments" demanded by Israel in agreements for an Israeli army redeployment in the West Bank town of Hebron, already six months behind schedule, he said.

"We must strengthen measures which will allow the Jewish residents to live in security," he said, referring to the 400 Jewish settlers living among 120,000 Palestinians in Hebron. Hebron is the last Palestinian town in the West Bank, except East Jerusalem, still under Israeli occupation.

Mr. Netanyahu also repeated that he would not follow the steps of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in accepting a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, occupied from Syria in 1967 and annexed in 1981.

"We call for maintaining Israeli sovereignty over all the Golan. If we offer everything to the Syrians (like Rabin) they will think they can gain more," he added.

Asked if he believed Syrian President Hafez Al Assad desired peace, Mr. Netanyahu said that if Mr. Assad resumed negotiations with Israel "that would mean he wants peace. That is the test he faces."

Iran, U.S. poised for court battle

THE HAGUE (R) — Arch enemies Iran and the United States are squaring up for a battle at the International Court of Justice this week over the destruction of three Iranian oil platforms by U.S. warships almost 10 years ago.

Iran has asked the U.N. court to rule that the attacks on the oil platforms in October 1987 and April 1988 violated international law and that the U.S. should pay damages. But Washington will ask the judges to throw the case out, arguing that the strikes were a legitimate response to attacks on a U.S. frigate and an oil tanker sailing under the U.S. flag.

The disputed events date back to the final stages of the 1980-88 war between Iran and Iraq when the U.S. sent naval forces to the Gulf to protect international shipping.

More recently the United States has been waging an international campaign to isolate Tehran for its alleged involvement in terrorist acts against the West.

Iran strongly denies such charges and says Washington is bent on toppling its Islamic government.

In August U.S. President Bill Clinton adopted a law which penalises companies investing more than \$40 mil-

lion a year in the oil and gas industries of Iran and Libya. Tehran accused Washington of behaving like a bully and European countries also criticised the unilateral U.S. move, saying it would unfairly penalise their oil companies.

Iran promptly filed suits at the Iran-U.S. claims tribunal in the Hague against the new law and the allocation of \$20 million in U.S. funds for covert political action in Iran.

Though based in the same city as the International Court of Justice, the claims tribunal has no links with it.

The court is a U.N. body created to settle disputes between all states according to international law, while the tribunal arbitrates only on financial claims between the U.S. and Iran.

Set up under the 1981 Algiers accords which freed 52 Americans held hostage in Tehran, the tribunal's main task is to settle claims arising from the severing of diplomatic relations in the aftermath of Iran's Islamic revolution.

Working behind closed doors, it has to date awarded some \$2.1 billion to the U.S. and just over \$1.0 billion to Iran, compensating U.S. oil companies whose assets were nationalised and releasing Iranian funds frozen in U.S.

bank accounts. Despite the often hostile state of their bilateral relations, Tehran and Washington showed in February that they can settle disputes without outside arbitration or adjudication.

Iran dropped a case at the International Court of Justice over the shooting down in July 1988 of an Iranian airliner after the U.S. agreed to pay up to \$300,000 to families of each of the 248 Iranians on board who were killed.

Washington said one of its warships had downed the Iranian Airbus after mistaking it for an attacking Iranian warplane, but Iran condemned it as a deliberate attack on a civil aircraft.

Hearings in the oil platforms dispute will open on Monday with the U.S. arguing that Iran has failed to prove that there is a valid basis for the U.N. court to deal with the case.

T court has to be satisfied that its jurisdiction has been properly established before it can proceed with a case.

Iran argues that this condition is satisfied by the 1955 Treaty of Amity between the two countries which states that disputes relating to the treaty are to be referred to the court.

Many Singaporean students don't know who is premier

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Nearly half of Singapore's grade six students, mostly 12 year-olds, do not know who their prime minister is, according to the results of an Education Ministry survey published Sunday. Only 51 per cent of the students surveyed identified Goh Chok Tong as the island's premier, said the survey, adding that many pupils were unable to give the title of the national anthem.

Majulah Singapura — or misspell it. The ministry quizzed 2,525 primary and secondary school as well as junior college and polytechnic students for the survey conducted after a newspaper street poll found younger Singaporeans were largely ignorant of the city-state's history. Many left unanswered a question on why a state of emergency was declared in Singapore from 1948 to 1960, and a few thought it was imposed as a result of a water shortage, the survey said. The emergency was called to fight Communist subversion and insurgency. Prime Minister Goh said in a speech earlier this month that Singaporean youth did not know enough of the island's recent history, including facts surrounding its separation from Malaysia in 1965 following a dispute over racial rights.

China population hit 1.212 billion at end of 1995

BEIJING (R) — China's population hit 1.212 billion at the end of 1995 and could jump to 1.3 billion at the end of the century if families defy a strict one-couple, one-child family planning policy, officials said Friday. The number of Chinese could top 1.3 billion if the total fertility rate, or the average number of children borne by each woman in her lifetime, reached 2.5 in the five years from 1996 to 2000, an official of the Population Statistics Department said by telephone. The current total fertility rate was about 2.0 and if it remained at that level, China's population would hit 1.279 billion in 2000, the official said. China limits couples to one child, and while this policy is strictly enforced in cities it is flouted with greater frequency in rural areas where increasingly well-off farmers have the inevitable fines to boost their families. China had hoped to keep its population below 1.2 billion until 2000 but abandoned that target after people exceeded that number in February 1995. It then set the new end-of-century target at 1.3 billion. China had 1.212 billion people at the end of 1995, the official said.

'Britons work longest hours in Europe'

STOCKHOLM (R) — Britons work the longest hours in Europe, according to a study by Sweden's central statistics bureau. Statistics Sweden said Britons on average worked 43.8 hours a week in 1995, excluding overtime. Portugal came second in the list working an average 41.9 hours a week, said the report, published in Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter. Swedes were third, working 40.7 hours which the study said added up to two and a half weeks a year more than 10 years ago. Greece was fourth with 40.8 hours but this included overtime while the other countries surveyed involved only basic hours. Spaniards worked 40.6 hours, the Irish and French 40.1 hours, and Germans 39.9 hours. Ninth was Luxembourg with 39.8 hours. The Netherlands notched up 39.6 hours, Denmark 39.5 hours, Norway 38.8 hours, Italy 38.6 hours, and Finland 38.4 hours. Belgians came last, working on average 38.4 hours a week. The report is to be officially released later this month.

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